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THE
RAPE OF PROSERPINE.
WITH
Other Poems,

Claud.

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THE
RAPE OF PROSERPINE:
WITH OTHER POEMS,
From Claudian;
TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE.
WITH A PREFATORY DISCOURSE, AND
OCCASIONAL NOTES.

Claudianus, Claudius

BY JACOB GEORGE STRUTT.

T

L O N D O N :

PRINTED BY A. J. VALPY, TOOKE'S COURT,
CHANCERY LANE.

SOLD BY MESSRS. LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,
PATERNOSTER ROW;
AND JOSIAH CONDER, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD.

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PREFACE.

THE poet, from whose works the following selection is translated, was a native of Alexandria, and flourished at Rome in the time of the Emperors Honorius and Arcadius; his character as a writer was of the highest reputation, and he enjoyed, for a long period, the favor of the court, to the glory of which his muse was chiefly devoted. His prosperity, however, was interrupted by the ruin of his friend and patron, Stilicho, the great general and minister of the Western Empire; and the few remaining years of the poet were passed in poverty and disgrace: but his name is preserved and esteemed in every country,

and posterity classes him among the most celebrated heroic poets.

It has been the study of the translator to present to the English reader, as far as the genius of the language admitted, a correct view of the style and manner of his author, for which purpose he has chosen the exterior decoration of blank verse, as being more sonorous and majestic than rhyme, and better adapted to express the varied excellence of the poet, the powerful redundancy, and the occasional, and grateful, brevity of his muse. A due attention has, likewise, been paid to exhibit such of his works only as present his poetical character in the fairest light; those are consequently avoided which denote a courtly and servile flatterer. The Rape of Proserpine is, perhaps, the only one of his larger pieces, so entirely unmixed with baser matter, as to demand our unqualified praise; but the poem of Rufinus has been admitted, in order to exhibit the talents of Claudian, exerted upon a subject that justly

required the extreme of his invective. These two, with a few smaller poems, complete the plan of the present work.

The peculiar beauties of Claudian consist in a certain delicacy and tenderness of thought, united to bold and luxuriant description: but in no one of his productions are these qualities so decided, and so unadulterate, as in the Rape of Proserpine, wherein alone we perceive the true vigour of the poet, unrestrained by the degrading necessity of administering to the vanity of contemporary greatness, and exerted upon a theme in itself rich and inspiring. If indeed we compare this poem with the other pieces produced by the same author, we shall find it entirely free from those defects which have hitherto cast a veil of reproach over his fame, that strain of adulation and extravagant metaphor, from which the more moderate reader of the present day turns with apathy or disgust. Even in our own times, among the works of our native poets, how

short-lived is the breath of mere panegyric ! The odes and songs of Waller are yet listened to with delight, but the language of the same writer is forgotten when he celebrates Charles, or records the fame of Cromwell ; and yet, to English ears, these are more memorable personages than Honorius and Arcadius, or Stilicho, to whom Claudian has devoted so large a portion of poetry and praise.

In the Rape of Proserpine the author seems to have enlarged with considerable variation, upon the fable sketched out by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses* ; the construction is not purely epic ; the most important incidents are too much hurried in the opening of the piece, and other deviations from strict rule may be found ; yet such is the splendor and majesty of this beautiful production, and so just and natural its pathos, that it has excited in an eminent degree the attention and praise of a numerous and learned class of readers, and has undergone a variety of translations into the Italian and French langua-

ges, while the remaining works of the poet have been, by no means, so generally esteemed. This partiality is very justly due to a poem, which the author himself preferred beyond any other of the fruits of his invention or study, and upon which he appears to have intended to build his fame. The story of Proserpine is frequently alluded to by our most eminent writers ; Shakespeare, in “ the Winter’s tale,” makes Perdita regret the inclemency of the season, that afforded her so few flowers to adorn her feast, exclaiming

O, Proserpina,
 For the flowers now, that, frightened, thou lett’st fall
 From Dis’s waggon ! daffodils,
 That come before the swallow dares, and take
 The winds of March with beauty ; violets, dim,
 But sweeter than the lids of Juno’s eyes,
 Or Cytherea’s breath ; pale primroses,
 That die unmarried,———

Milton, likewise, in dwelling upon the beauties of Eden, seems to carry in his mind, throughout the whole of his description, a mute comparison of that delicious garden, to the no less enchanting plains of Enna ;

—————Not that fair field
 Of Enna, where Prosērpīn gathering flowers,
 Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis
 Was gather'd, which cost Ceres all that pain
 To seek her through the world————
 —————might with this paradise
 Of Eden strive. Paradise Lost, iv. 268.

The poem of Rufinus, although less calculated to please than the Rape of Proserpine, possesses many passages of singular beauty, as well descriptive, as of moral dignity ; it would be perhaps difficult to discover, even in the admired pages of Horace or Virgil, more elegant strains, or more pleasing philosophy, than the calm reflections of the

poet, upon a view of the comparison of courtly grandeur, with the charms of rural ease and retirement.* Our great poet Milton appears, at a very early age, to have studied this poem, and to have partly employed it as a model for his first attempt towards framing a production in the style of Epic dignity, in his Latin work, "De Quinto Novembris," in which the dawnings of that brilliant genius may be 'discovered, which afterwards so conspicuously shone forth in the unrivalled composition of *Paradise lost*. This similarity is extremely obvious upon comparing the first book of *Rufinus* with the latin poem of Milton, and it is confirmed upon a closer inspection of particular passages: the following extracts will perhaps be sufficient to awaken the attention of the curious reader to a further consideration of the subject.

Alecto late, with envy and dismay,

* See *Rufinus*, i. 111.

Observed how all the earth was bless'd with peace :

Promptly to horrid council she invokes

Th' infernal sisters ; and assembles swift

Innumerable shapes of strife,—————

Claudian.

Milton, transferring the scene of action to the British shores, and substituting Satan for Alecto, has the following passage ;

This island, blest with wealth and festive peace,

Satan observ'd, deck'd with Cerean spoils,

Her plenteous fields, and, what he inly grieved,

A people worshipping high God alone.

—————deep sighs burst from his tortured breast,

Mingled with lurid sulphur and dark flame.

—————his kindling eye-balls flash

Fierce fury, and his iron teeth he grinds

Implacable :

The Fury in Claudian thus discloses her regrets and her hatred;

Shall then this age untroubled pass away
And nations dwell in order and in peace?
Whence this new clemency that mars our reign?
Why harmless falls our rage?—————

—————let us attempt
What fits our name, resume our wonted power,
And plan some mischief mightier than our foes.

In a similar tone of surprise and anger Satan is made to exclaim—

And have I ranged the world, and find alone
This isle, said he, this lamentable land,
Rebellious, and more powerful than my art?
O, yet, revenge, if aught my strength avails,
Though long delay'd, shall strike this destined soil.

In the poem of Claudian, Alecto assumes the disguise of old age, and excites Rufinus to place himself under her guidance ; with similar contrivance, the British poet arrays his evil agent in the venerable garb and semblance of years, more fully to impress the slumbering pontiff with the high importance of his visit, and at once to demand respect and obedience.—The principal circumstances in the story of Rufinus are related with historic truth.

Upon the Phœnix, Claudian has exerted the most brilliant powers of language, and the Translator has selected it to afford an example to the English reader, of the gorgeous and redundant style of the Author ; but the splendid extravagance of the story is too wild and fictitious to be treated upon, even in verse, and ought only to be employed by the poet, as a rich and beautiful allusion.

With respect to the present publication, although the translator may not feel it necessary to apologize for introducing his classic original to the public, yet he cannot but express his hope that it will receive with indulgence his attempt to engraft upon English letters, one of those ancient fables, which, abounding in fancy, and rich in lofty and varied sentiment, have lent enchantment to the poet, and awakened the skill of the painter and the sculptor. Among the numerous original productions of the present day there seems to be but little attempt to direct the stream of poetry into these neglected channels of literature ; the pencil, indeed, is still devoted to the cause of Antiquity, and the Genius of Athens, and of Rome, animates the toil, and breathes upon the canvass of our modern artists ; but in the page of the poet we seldom now discover any traces of the records of those golden ages of learning and invention, when Homer and Theocritus sung, and Virgil, who did not disdain to study after his immortal predecessors. He too, of later times,

who, among our native bards, walks with unrivalled step, assuming to himself the title of one divinely inspired, and long since adorned with our highest praises, has not deemed it unworthy of his powers, to scatter among his works such treasures as the studious watchfulness of his youth selected and obtained from the most renowned masters of Greece and Rome ; it has, indeed, been thought that Milton affected a display of learning, in his frequent allusions to classic imagery, and it has been attributed to him as a fault that he has so often imbued his pencil in the chaste colors of Antiquity ; but, to every reader of true taste and feeling, additional beauty is derived from appropriate recollections of past ages ; and the author of *Paradise Lost* has sufficiently proved that the laurels of Greece are not ungracefully entwined around the British oak.

THE
RAPE OF PROSERPINE.

BOOK I.

Introduction.

HE who first trusted to the faithless deep,
And kiss'd the waves, with rude unfinish'd oar,
Who rode upon the treach'rous element,
Launch'd in a hollow'd elm, and gain'd through art
A path which nature had denied to man ;

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Claud.

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Trembling at first, to tranquil seas alone

He gives the cautious bark, and near to land

Plies the yet timid oar ; more vent'rous soon

A wider range his roving vessel steers,

And to the gentle breathings of the south 10

Expands her flutt'ring sail : but when his soul

Acquires encreasing courage, and his heart

The languid influence of fear rejects,

He flies exulting o'er the boundless main,

Following the stars of heav'n, and boldly dares 15

Ægean winters and Ionian seas.

THE
RAPE OF PROSERPINE.

Book I.

OF Hell's dread ravisher, whose fiery car
And ebon steeds affrighted from their spheres
The train of night; of Pluto's bridal bow'r,
Dark in its festive gloom with horrid shades,
My lab'ring mind impels my eager voice 5
In daring notes to sing. Hence, ye profane—
Now inspiration breathes and lifts my soul
Transported; all Apollo fires my breast:
Before my sight the marble-structur'd fanes
Tremble around, and from the glorious dome 10

Beams of celestial radiance attest
 The advent of the god. Earth's num'rous shores
 Murmur applause, each blazing altar glows ;
 While notes triumphant from the sculptur'd walls
 Of Athens' sacred temple, or Eleusis', 15
 Swell on the raptur'd ear. The dragon yoke
 Exalt their shining crests, in calmed mood,
 And list the song, and wave their color'd necks.
 See Hecat rises, threefold queen ; and clad
 In tiger's spoils, clasp'd with refulgent gold, 20
 Gay Bacchus comes, in ivy garlands drest,
 And with the thyrsus guides his reeling steps.

Ye whom the lesser pow'rs of hell obey,
 Immortals, to whose wealth unlimited
 Time adds decaying worlds, ye whom the Styx 25
 Surrounds with melancholy wave, while floods
 Of liquid flame brighten your dread abodes,
 Deign to reveal your hidden mysteries,
 And tell the secrets of your race ! O say,

What torch of love inspired the gloomy king, 30
 What sudden seizure doom'd stern Proserpine
 To joyless Chaos ; tell through what wide shores
 Her anxious mother roved complaining. Whence
 Rude nations laws obtain'd, and o'er the fields
 Gay harvests rose where late the acorn fell. 35

Longtime the prince of night in brooding thought
 Fierce war against the Thund'rer had revolved,
 Kindled to ire that he alone should want
 Fit partner to his bed ; of all the gods
 That he sole joyless should consume his age 40
 Childless, and unendear'd by nuptial ties.
 And now from shadowy dens and caves of death
 Rushes each monstrous brood, the furies arm'd
 Provoke the fight, and fell Tisiphoné
 With snaky hair waves high a burning pine, 45
 And calls the buried dead to join the strife.

Then had the elements no more obey'd

The voice of nature, by the discord wild
 Loos'd from their firm allegiance ; the stern youth,
 Of Titan race, bursting his bonds, again 50
 The beaming splendor of the skies had seen ;
 And fierce Ægeon, from his gory shape
 Casting his manacles, once more had waked,
 And threaten'd heav'n with all his hundred hands.
 But such dire evils the controlling Fates 55
 Oppos'd, and fearing for the world, knelt low
 Before the throne of Pluto, and their locks, .
 White with severest age, strew'd at his feet
 Imploring, and with sighs and moving tears
 Embraced the knees of their immortal king, 60
 Whose changeless will appoints the secret path
 That destiny pursues, and in whose mind
 Are lock'd the dark events of future years.

First Lachesis, with wild dishevell'd hair,
 Address'd the fiery king : " O god of night, 65
 Stern monarch of the dead ; for whom we ply

" The ceaseless labors of the fatal loom ;
 " Ruler of Chaos, who to all things giv'st
 " Their origin and end, of nature's works
 " The cradle and the grave, sole arbiter 70
 " Of life and death. (For all of matter form'd
 " By thee created live, to thee return,
 " Shadowy ghosts, and, certain ages past,
 " These spirits of the dead again assume
 " Corporeal substance.) O seek not to rend 75
 " That web of peace our hands so firmly wove ;
 " Nor the harsh trumpet of discordant strife
 " Sound in fraternal ears. Why wave these signs,
 " Portending impious conflict? Why appears
 " The hateful Titan brood? Ah, rather seek 80
 " With lowly plaints to move ; so shall Jove grant
 " Thy utmost wishes, and to soothe thy cares
 " Yield a fit mate."—No more her falt'ring tongue ;
 Nor further argument the god required,
 But, blushing deep, relax'd his fierce design, 85
 Though stern, nor us'd to bend. So when the North,

With furious whirlwinds and tempestuous hail,
 Rushes to battle upon stormy wings,
 Threat'ning the seas, the woods, the hills, the plains,
 With blust'ring rage—if haply Eolus 90
 Upbraid the gath'ring strife, silent at once
 Sinks the vain tumult, and the calmed storms,
 Broken, retire into their peaceful cells.

Then Maia's offspring he commands to bear
 His ardent suit to Jove. Swiftly appear'd 95
 Cyllenius at his call, robed in light wings
 With shining casque, and sleep-inducing rod.
 He on his awful throne majestic sat
 Frowning in splendor, and with horrors plumed ;
 Gleam'd his huge sceptre through the frightful shade, 100
 Unusual darkness veil'd his lofty brow,
 And dimm'd his form, while sorrow to his mien
 Gave threefold terrors. Then aloud he spake :
 And at his voice through all her dismal courts
 Hell trembled, whilst the guardian of her gates 105

Silenced his monstrous throat, and each swift flood
 And fiery torrent check'd their furious streams
 And hush'd the boiling tumult of their waves.
 " Offspring of Atlas, whom these shades profound,
 " And heav'n's fair light, receive, in both a god, 110
 " Sole privileged in either world to dwell,
 " Bear to the haughty ruler of the skies,
 " And swiftly speed thy flight, these my resolves—
 " O most implacable, what right extorts
 " To thee obedience! When fortune gave 115
 " The glorious heav'ns, say did she also take
 " Thy brother's strength away? are we bereft
 " Of arms and courage in these realms of night?
 " Or dost thou deem us spiritless and weak
 " Because we brandish not Vulcanian steel, 120
 " Or cheat with sounds of thunder idle ears!
 " Thou know'st, by lot deprived of brighter day,
 " I took the third and baser portion, scenes
 ' Hideous and wild; but round thy joyous roof
 " The zodiac shone, and beauteous splendors dwelt. 125

" Dost thou prohibit, too, joys that attend
 " On wedded hours? on hoary Neptune see
 " The azure daughter of Nerëus smiles;
 " And thee, when wars and victories oppress,
 " Imperial Juno soothes with kindred love. 130
 " Why should I tell how oft illicit flames
 " Have moved thee! still a joyous race is thine,
 " Whilst I in lonely halls neglected mourn,
 " Nor solace find, nor rest from anxious cares.
 " Intolerable state! by night's dark sire, 135
 " I swear, and this inviolable stream,
 " Be my complaints unheard, my rage shall wake
 " The very depths of hell, and Saturn's bonds
 " Unloose: darkness shall visit light, and day
 " Roll his bright axle to the caves of death!"— 140

Scarce had he ended when the winged pow'r
 Sprung up in airy flight, and gain'd the stars:
 But Jove had heard the mandate, and perplex'd
 With varying thoughts, deep in his breast revolved

Where likeliest to find one who would quit 145
 The radiance of the sun, for Stygian gloom,
 And Pluto's arms. At length his will decides,

Ceres one fair and lovely daughter own'd ;
 A single pledge, for ne'er Lucina gave
 A second birth ; yet did the goddess seem 150
 Proudest of mothers, blest with Proserpine ;
 Who in herself, with rare perfection form'd,
 Alone appear'd to match the goodliest race.
 Her she caresses, and with anxious eye
 Follows her steps : not with more jealous care 155
 The lowing parent her young heifer guards,
 In fields when spring is wanton, ere the bud
 Of youth is fashion'd on its tender brow.

Now to the verge of soft maturity
 Her days approach, and Hymen's glowing flame 160
 Inspires the maid with hopes and doubtful fears.
 Suitors crowd round ; and for her grace contend

Indignant rivals ; Mars who wields in fight
 The gleaming falchion, and Apollo famed
 For swift, unerring bow ; they proffer gifts, 165
 Wide realms and lofty tow'rs ; the god of war
 Yields up his Rhodopé, and Phœbus gives
 Woody Amyclas and the Clarian walls :
 Juno is emulous of one so fair,
 And pleased Latona seeks her for her son. 170
 But Ceres scorns their suit, and fearing love
 May prompt some desp'rate deed, (ah, blind to fate!)
 Commends in secrecy her darling care
 To wild Sicilia's solitary isle.
 Join'd to th' Italian fields once lay that shore, 175
 Till the rude floods their furious force essay'd,
 And Nereus rode between the sever'd hills.
 Yet small the space that parts the kindred plains,
 For Nature farther violence opposed,
 And rear'd her barrier-cliffs. Pachinus' rocks 180
 Deride th' Ionian tempests ; and the waves
 That roaring from the Afric soil advance,

Beat idly on the Lilybæan cape,
 Whilst the vex'd Tyrrhene deep, mad with control,
 On high Pelorus wastes its angry tides. 185
 Half hid by flames, in middle of the isle
 Etna uprears his tow'ring grandeur; proud
 Of glorious conquest o'er the giant foe,
 Wrathful Enceladus who, wounded, lies
 Enchain'd, and groaning with the mountain's weight, 190
 And breathing from his throat sulphureous fires.
 And oft, as press'd with his unwieldy load
 The rebel-giant turns his wearied sides,
 He makes whole cities tremble, and the isle
 To shake in dread convulsions on her seat. 195

The mountain's summit is explored alone
 By upward-gazing eyes, nor e'er permits
 The traveller's vent'rous foot; below thick groves
 Shadow the hill; but on the parched heights
 No cheerful vegetation glads the sight. 200
 Now vomiting dark clouds it hides the day

With foul engender'd vapors, black and dense ;
 Now hurls against the stars tremendous rocks,
 And fiercely breathes with self-consuming fires.
 Yet, though with sateless fury burn those flames, 205
 Thou, Etna, still endur'st ; for high-heap'd snows
 And ribs of ice temper the boiling floods,
 To flow innoxious round thy frost-bound sides.

What fury agitates ? what mighty pow'r
 Tempests this cavern'd hill ? whence flow these streams
 Vulcanian ? either the rushing winds 211
 Pent up, and howling in the mould'ring caves,
 Struggle for liberty, with sulph'rous fires,
 And raging seek their exit ; or the sea,
 Press'd in the gloomy and unfathom'd vaults 215
 Moves this destruction, mingling with the flames

Soon as the tender mother had conceal'd
 Her treasured hope, to ancient Cybele,
 And Ida's woods, more calm, she bends her way,

Guiding her dragon yoke, who swiftly trace 220
 The airy region, and with venom'd dew
 Moisten their bits : High rose their crested fronts,
 Their variegated forms green hues reflect,
 And glist'ring gold. Through bands of Zephyrs' wings
 Now soars the car, now downward skims the plains ; 225
 Touch'd by the magic wheels, the dusty glebe
 Grows fertile ; suddenly rich grain upsprings,
 And clothes the sacred path, and ev'ry track
 Spontaneous harvests fill. Now Etna fades,
 And all Trinacria's isle melts on the view. 230
 Alas ! how oft, omens of future ill,
 Did rising tears obscure the mother's eyes !
 How oft, with fond regret, did Ceres look
 Upon the fading fields, sighing these words,—
 " O pleasing shades, and thou, blest isle, preserve 235
 " The daughter of the skies ; to you I leave
 " The fairest of our race ; O safely guard
 " The much endearing maid ! Gifts shall be your's,
 " Of no inferior value ; ev'ry vale,

" And upland sweep, abundant fruits shall yield, 240
 " Nor previous labor ask ; whilst floods of grain
 " Shall wave luxuriant, o'er untillaged fields,
 " And cheat the wond'ring native of his toil."—

So spake the goddess, and on Ida's top
 Now stay'd her dragon steeds. A lofty pile, 245
 Of venerable workmanship, uprear'd
 Its splendid walls ; the fane of Cybele,
 By thick, innumerable boughs of pine
 Encompass'd, where low, mournful melodies,
 Resounding, sigh amid the whisp'ring leaves, 250
 Though by no breath of wind, or tempest stirr'd:
 Within fierce Bacchants rage, and all the fane
 Groans with mad orgies, while their shrieks around
 Ida repeats, and bows her frightened woods.

Soon as fair Ceres enters, straight the choir 255
 Silence their songs, the timbrel's hollow sound,
 The shrilling pipe, and ev'ry instrument

Of brazen mold, no more impierce the ear ;
 The madd'ning priests throw down their clashing swords,
 And the sooth'd lions bow their tamer heads. 260
 From her shrine leaps Cybele rejoicing,
 And to salute the goddess bends her tow'rs.

Jove from his lofty throne these things beholds,
 And to the ear of Venus straight imparts
 His inmost thoughts. " O queen of love, to thee 265
 " The secret counsels of my stedfast mind
 " I tell. Long since I have resolv'd to yield
 " The beauteous Proserpine to Pluto's arms,
 " A peerless bride—So Justice wills, and such
 " Is Fate's decree. Now therefore speed thy course 270
 " To the Sicanian shores ; the time is apt,
 " The mother distant far ; and when the dawn
 " Crimsons the morrow's sky, entice the maid
 " To sport amid the variegated fields ;
 " Allure her, arm'd with those resistless wiles 275
 " Which spread thine empire o'er the subject globe,

Claud.

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" And oft the breast of Jove himself inflame—
 " No region's capes, no nook, nor shade conceals
 " The heart that's inaccessible to thee,
 " Why then is Tartarus alone secure? 280
 " Let sad Erinnys with new ardors glow,
 " And Acheron, and gloomy Dis allay
 " Their fiercer mood with thy delicious cares."

Swiftly the goddess speeds, and with her takes,
 At Jove's behest, companions of her way, 285
 Minerva, and the crested Queen, whose bow
 Oft terrifies the wild Arcadian groves.
 Rich splendors track their course, as when on high,
 With sanguine flames, and prodigal of light,
 Some glowing comet, through the air serene, 290
 Portentous rides—him the pale seaman views
 Aghast, and cities tremble; for he bodes,
 With bright and threat'ning hair, impending fate,
 Shipwrecks, and storms, and desolating war.

They reach the spot where shone the bright abode 295
 Of Ceres, by Cyclopiàn hands uprear'd,
 With tow'ring walls of steel, and iron gates,
 Secur'd by pond'rous bars : the toiling slaves
 Of Vulcan never with more labor strove
 Than when that structure rose ; nor ever breathed 300
 More lurid sighs ; nor since that time have flow'd
 Such fiery torrents from the blazing forge.
 Ivory adorns each court, and ev'ry roof
 With sculptur'd brass consolidated shines,
 And sparkling ores in lofty columns rise. 305

In these fair halls sits lovely Proserpine,
 And soothing with sweet song the tedious day,
 Plies the swift loom, expectant of the hour
 When Ceres should return. Her needle paints
 The birth and order of the elements ; 310
 And shows by what true laws Nature appeased
 Pristine confusion, when her parent hand
 Assign'd each unfix'd principle a seat :

Up springs each subtle essence, while below
 Matter more pond'rous sinks ; transparent floats 315
 The ether ; ocean swells ; earth's pictur'd orb
 Hangs in the firmament. Rich colors grace
 The various web ; stars glitter bright in gold ;
 Dark purple flows the sea ; the rocky shores
 Sparkle in gems ; so well the threads deceive, 320
 That, whilst th' enchanted eye fancies the waves
 To swell and ripple on the moving floods,
 The ear, deluded, seems to catch the sound
 Of murm'ring waters, breaking on the sand,
 And sea-weed dashing on the marble rocks. 325
 Five zones she forms ; one the rich scarlet woof
 Displays, as parch'd by fierce and burning suns,
 Barren and dry ; two others, temperate
 And habitable, glow with softer hues ;
 Joyless and cold the last, with sullen tract, 330
 Cover each pole, wrapt in perpetual gloom.

Nor were those regions undisplay'd, which lie

By melancholy Styx ; nor omen sad
 Was wanting : sudden tears obscured her eyes,
 And dimm'd the moisten'd colors of the web. 835

And now, with undulating line, her hand
 Began to trace the limits of the deep,—
 When the rent filaments, and woof reversed,
 Declared the presence of th' etherial pow'rs :
 Straight she forsakes the half-unfinish'd work, 340
 While crimson blushes paint her beauteous cheeks,
 Beaming in modesty ; so ivory glows
 When Lydian artists tinge its pearly hues
 With rich Sidonian dyes. Meanwhile the sun
 Dipp'd in the western wave, and dewy Eve 345
 Led on the train of night, whose gentle sway
 Sheds sweet repose upon the wearied world.

And now prepared to seek the upper skies,
 Warn'd by the voice of Jove, Pluto arose ;
 And stern Alecto brings the dusky steeds 350

That pasture by Cocytus' fiery banks,
 In shades of Erebus, and drink the wave
 Of-stagnant Lethe, breathing thence around
 Oblivious vapors ; Orphneus, glaring stern ;
 Cæthon, more swift than dart ; Nycteus, pride 355
 Of all th' infernal race ; and, Pluto's care,
 Alastor wild ; yoked at the gates they stand,
 And fiercely breathe, and shake their dreadful manes,
 Expecting, in the morn, a glorious prize.

END OF BOOK I

THE
RAPE OF PROSERPINE.

BOOK II.

Introduction.

TO FLORENTINE.

WHEN tuneful Orpheus, in silent grief,
Had laid his harp aside, neglected long
Each soul-inspiring air, the woodland nymphs
Deplored their solace gone, and mournful streams
Wept in sad unison. To savage beasts

Ferocious cruelty return'd, and oft,
 The trembling herds, threaten'd by rav'nous jaws,
 Implored assistance of the speechless lyre.
 Him silent, mountains mourn'd, and ev'ry grove,
 No more responsive to the sweet-toned shell. 10
 But when Alcides, from the Argive realms,
 To Thrace impell'd his steps, and overthrew
 The dreadful stalls besmear'd with human gore,
 And made the coursers of the barb'rous king
 Feed on green pastures; for his country rous'd, 15
 Rejoicing in her good, the poet sought
 Once more his warbling lute, and having wove
 To modulation sweet each idle chord,
 With flying fingers swept the magic strains.
 Then winds grew calm, and billows ceased to swell; 20
 Swift Hebrus stopp'd his course, and to the strain

Waste Rhodope inclined her barren rocks,
 While Ossa bow'd, and shook her snows around :
 The lofty poplar from its mountain came ;
 The pine descended too, and, with her, led 25
 The master oak ; and timid Daphne, pleased
 With the sweet singer's voice, fear'd not to come,
 Though all the arts of am'rous Phœbus ne'er
 Allured her steps before. The fearful hare
 Securely sported with Molossian hounds, 30
 And yearling lambs pastured beside the wolf ;
 The gentle hind with spotted tigers play'd,
 And hungry lions with the bounding stag.

He the long labors of Alcides sung,
 And all the monsters vanquish'd by his arm, 3
 Who, yet an infant, smiling in his ire,

Before his trembling mother sternly held
 The bleeding snakes his tender hands had crush'd.
 Thee not that dreadful bull, whose roaring shook
 The Cretan cities, nor the Stygian dog, 40
 Appall'd ; nor the fierce lion, ere he rose
 Bright in the firmament, nor the rough boar
 The dread of Erymanth. With dauntless hand
 From Amazonian breasts thou didst unloose
 The warlike ciuncture ; and thy matchless bow 45
 Drove off those worse than harpy wings, that hung
 Destructive on the western shores. The rage
 Of mighty Geryon thou didst subdue,
 With all his num'rous limbs, and tripled form ;
 A single victor o'er a field of foes. 50
 In vain Antæus fell, and Hydra grew
 Apace at ev'ry wound ; conquer'd, they died.

Not the swift stag could 'scape thy swifter feet :

Cacus in flames expired : Egypt's fell king

Redden'd the Nile : Pholoë's azure wave 55

The cloud-begotten Centaur's blood distain'd.

Thee Libya's deep in wonder hath beheld :

Thee Atlas dreads, since, from his shoulders moved

He saw the world sit firmer upon thine ;

Apollo's orb, and ev'ry star gave light 60

Resting upon thy head ! So sung the bard

Of Thrace ; and as the hero him, so me

My Florentine inspires to sing ; to us

A new Alcides. He these numbers moves,

Waking the melody of all the Nine, 65

And bids my silent lyre again be heard.

THE
RAPE OF PROSERPINE.

Book II.

THE day yet scarcely ris'n, with warning light
Now touch'd th' Ionian deep, the gradual ray
Glanced on the trembling waves ; and purpling beams,
Irradiate, on the changeful waters play'd ;
When all elate, and of her parent's will 5
Forgetful, Proserpine, by Venus led,
The dewy woods, and flow'ry pastures seeks :
Thrice on their hinges creak'd the pond'rous gates,
Presaging ill ; thrice, conscious of her doom,
Groan'd Etna, sighing from his dismal caves. 10

But she nor prodigy nor omen mark'd ;—
 Issuing abroad, by all her virgin train
 Attended. Venus, smiling in deceit,
 Walks first, and plans the maiden's future fall ;
 Pleased that dark Chaos shall confess her reign, 15
 And Pluto, with his vanquish'd shadowy tribes,
 Swell her proud triumphs. Loose her waving hair
 Flows in redundant curls, with jewels graced ;
 And, gemm'd with diamonds, a rich golden clasp,
 The work of Vulcan, binds her purple robes. 20

Her follow next the fair Arcadian queen,
 And she whose spear protects th' Athenian tow'rs ;
 A virgin pair—one in the glorious chase,
 One fam'd in sanguine war. A shining helm
 Minerva wore, which, richly sculptured, show'd 25
 Fell Typhon blasted by the Thund'rer's bolt,
 As yet, half dead, in agony he breathed.
 A glitt'ring jav'lin in her hand she bears,
 But veils beneath the splendor of her robes,

Th' appalling terrors of the Gorgon shield. 30

A sweeter aspect mark'd Diana's form,
 With all the beauty of Apollo graced ;
 The same her cheeks, her radiant eyes the same ;
 By sex alone distinguish'd from the god ;
 Bare were her snowy arms, and wanton gales 35
 Play'd with the rich luxuriance of her hair.
 An unbent bow with slacken'd string she bore ;
 Behind, a quiver hung. Her Cretan vest
 Descended to the knee, cinctured with gold ;
 And Delos, broider'd on her floating robes, 40
 Appear'd to move amid the sparkling waves.

Among the goddesses, with equal gait,
 The blooming daughter of fair Ceres walk'd,
 Equal to them in majesty of face,
 And form : graced with a shield she might appear 45
 Minerva's self, or, quiver'd, rove the woods,
 Like Dian. On her vest a jasper beam'd :

Claud.

C

The skilful artist never from his loom
 Produced a woof so rich as that she wore,
 Nor with more pleasing subject interwove 50
 The many-color'd web. It show'd the birth
 Of bright Hyperion's son, and Luna pale,
 Supreme o'er day and night; how Tethys' nurse
 Upon her bosom bore the breathing babes,
 Whose rosy color graced the azure breast. 55
 The infant Phœbus on the right appear'd,
 Not with those burning and resistless beams
 Attired, that shine on his maturer brow;
 But pictured in the earliest dawn of life,
 And from his baby lips were seen to burst 60
 Soft glowing flames, mingled with tender cries:
 Upon the left his beauteous sister lay,
 With mimic crescent; and, with coral lip,
 Press'd the bland fluid from its crystal source.

So splendid her attire. Around her throng'd 65
 Attendant nymphs from each Sicilian stream,

That swiftly flows, or gently glides along,
 Wat'ring the isle, from old Criniseus' flood,
 And wild Pantagia, hurl'd o'er sounding rocks,
 And Gelas' fount, whose name a city owns ; 70
 They haste from Camerina's reedy shore,
 From Arethuse, and swift Alpheus' wave :
 Cyan rose eminent o'er all the train.

So in gay triumph oft, in Geta's fields,
 Or on Tanais' waste and frozen shore, 75
 A band of Amazons with mooned shields,
 Exulting, follow their courageous queen,
 After some battle won. Or, in like pomp,
 Rich Hermus sees the nymphs that celebrate
 The rites of Bacchus, on his flow'ry side, 80
 Adorn'd with golden sands ; meanwhile he pours,
 Rejoicing in his caves, more copious floods.

Now Enna, parent of sweet flowers, beheld
 From her green mountain-top, the sacred train,

And calling Zephyr to her side, who play'd 85
 Low in the shady bosom of the vale,
 Thus spake—" O grateful sov'reign of the spring,
 " Who, breathing soft assiduous gales around,
 " Through all this lovely valley reign'st supreme,
 " Behold those beauteous nymphs, with yonder three, 90
 " To Jove allied, met in our blooming fields,
 " In sportive mood. O be thou near, and breathe
 " Thy gentlest influence : let ev'ry bough
 " Bud with fresh fragrance, so that Hybla's self
 " Might envy, and confess her gardens fair 95
 " By these sweet bow'rs excell'd : let balmier airs
 " Than rich Arabia's dewy groves exhale,
 " Visit my shades with odors, such as steal
 " O'er soft Hydaspes' wave, or, grateful, flow
 " From that collected pile which the famed bird, 100
 " Expectant of new life, rears in the east,
 " Amid embow'ring woods : on all around
 " Diffuse new bloom, so that the gods may seek
 " This beauteous vale, and cull my various flow'rs."

She ended—and obedient Zephyr shook 105

More heav'nly fragrance from his dewy wings,

And fertilized the earth ; where'er he flies

The blushing Spring attends, and on the mold

Scatters fresh flow'rs, and scents the genial air ;

He tinges ev'ry rose with softer hues, 110

And the blue violet paints with od'rous bloom.

What cinctured waist of oriental king

Can boast such gems ? what choice Assyrian die

So brightly can distain the virgin fleece,

And emulate these purple flow'rs ? less gay 115

The bird of Juno waves his splendid train,

And Iris with inferior colors weaves

Th' etherial woof, when the green fields and woods

Shine through the painted air. Yet not alone

Was Nature's pride display'd, in brilliant hues ; 120

More beauteous still her fair proportions seem'd,

The level lawns to gentle risings swell'd,

And tow'ring hills by soft ascent were form'd ;

The crystal fountains gush'd from marble rocks,

And through the dewy herbage winding rills 125
 Play'd with melodious murmurs ; lofty woods
 Temper'd with grateful shade the noon-tide heat
 To icy coolness, ev'ry various tree ;
 The fir for mariners, the corneil fit
 For archers, and the statelier plant of Jove ; 130
 The mournful cypress, and the scarlet oak
 Enrich'd by bees, and prescient laurels green.
 Here rov'd the box, along the crisped paths ;
 Low ivies crept around, and flaunting vines
 Bound their smooth tendrils to majestic elms. 135
 Along the shady margin of the grove
 A tranquil lake extends, whose clear profound
 Invites the penetrating eye to trace
 The secret wonders of its lucid caves.

Now in the flow'ring fields the virgin train 140
 Gaily disport. Venus persuades to cull
 The scented blooms. " Come," she exclaims, " while
 now

" The morning sky glows with light's earliest ray,
 " And yonder star, shedding sweet influence,
 " Heralds th' approach of day's more fiery orb, 145
 " Come, sister-nymphs !" She spoke, and reach'd her hand,
 And pluck'd her fav'rite grief-inwoven flow'r.
 Meanwhile, dispersed around, the roving maids
 Throng in each various path, as when a swarm
 Of bees, led from their waxen citadel, 150
 Built in some hollow oak, following their queen
 O'er beds of thyme, cluster with pleasing hum,
 And visit ev'ry flow'r in search of sweets.

They spoil the treasures of the field ; some chuse
 Pale lilies to entwine with violet buds ; 155
 Some seek the rich Amaracus ; some walk
 With roses crown'd ; some deck'd with woodbine wreaths ;
 They spare not thee, sad Hyacinth, nor thee,
 Pallid Narcissus, pride of all the plain ;
 Once graceful youths : the fatal disk to one 160
 Brought timeless fate, and him Apollo mourns

With clouded beauty : Love the other doom'd
 To end his being by a fountain side,
 Pining for shadowy bliss, and him e'en now
 Cephisus sad deplores with broken reed. 165

More ardent to collect the fragrant spoils,
 The blooming maid, brown Ceres' only care,
 Exceeds her train ; now weaving pliant twigs,
 She heaps her rural wealth in smiling stores,
 Now joins in nuptial union many a bud, 170
 And thoughtless crowns her temples with the wreath,
 Too sure prognostic of her future fate !
 She, too, who revels in the field, when arms
 Resound, and trumpets bray, she, whose strong hand,
 Invincible, resists embattled hosts, 175
 And makes high walls and cities tremble,—now
 In softer toil engages, drops the spear,
 And with unusual garlands decks her helm :
 Her iron crest shows gay with wanton pride,
 Her martial terrors fly, and war no more 180

Sits on her rose-bound front. Neither did she,
 Whose tuneful hounds Parthenian gales explore,
 Disdain the sportive band : her tresses loose
 A woven coronet of flow'rs confined.

While thus in virgin pastime speed the hours, 185
 Lo ! suddenly a tumult wild and loud
 Arises ; turrets bow their trembling heads,
 And tow'rs and lofty spires are levell'd low ;
 No cause appears ; the Paphian queen alone
 Acknowledges the sign, and trembling feels 190
 A doubtful pleasure, mix'd with secret fear.
 And now the dark-brow'd ruler of the dead,
 Through shades, and winding caverns of the earth,
 Urges his fiery steeds—their cruel hoofs
 Trample on huge Enceladus, enchain'd 195
 And groaning ; and the chariot wheels drive o'er
 His monstrous limbs. The tortured giant writhes
 His wounded bulk in vain ; bearing at once
 The island, and the god ; in vain he strives
 To change his posture, and with feeble force 200

Escape those burning wheels : the smoking car
 Rides on his back. But as from some dark mine,
 In secret dug beneath embattled walls,
 The hidden enemy with conquering bands,
 Like those which sprang of old from dragon's teeth, 205
 Leaps out upon the pale astonish'd foe ;
 So the third son of Saturn, through the gloom
 Of earth's deep caverns, urging on his steeds,
 Attempts a passage to the realms of day :
 No gate appears, on ev'ry side huge rocks 210
 Oppose his path, with adamantine bars.
 Not long he brooks delay : indignant soon,
 He rears his sceptre, and the barrier strikes :
 Sicilia heard, and shook in all her caves ;
 Her rivers trembled, and stern Vulcan fled, 215
 Affrighted, from his forge, while, smit with fear,
 The Cyclops dropp'd th' unfinish'd bolt of Jove.
 He heard who dwelt upon the frozen Alps,
 And he who on the Tyber sail'd ; not yet
 With Roman trophies graced ; and he who steer'd 220

His swift-oar'd bark along the silver Po.

So when in Thessaly, shut in by rocks,
 The stagnant waters of Peneüs swell'd
 To one vast lake, and drown'd the fertile vales,
 Neptune with three-fork'd trident smote the hills ; 225
 Sore wounded with the stroke, Ossa leap'd down,
 And parted from Olympus ; straight released,
 Through the cleft mountains rush'd the roaring stream,
 And sought the seas : and land again appear'd.

And now to hell's unconquerable might 230
 Trinacria yields, and opes a hideous gulf :
 A strange and sudden horror dims the skies,
 And turns the courses of the stars—in waves
 Forbidden, Arctos dives, and, slow before,
 Boötes like some streaming meteor shoots ; 235
 Orion shudders at the neighing steeds,
 And Atlas pales his fire : their poison'd breath
 Obscures each glowing axle ; while the orb

Of Phœbus frights the coursers of the shades,
 Accustom'd to the gloom of night; and back, 240
 Astonish'd at the day, they start, and seek
 Once more to plunge into the depths of hell.

But on their stricken sides the frequent lash
 Resounds, and teaches them to bear the light.
 Onward they rush, wilder than wintry floods, 245
 Fierce as the jav'lin in its flight; more swift
 Than Parthian arrows, winds, or anxious thoughts.
 Dark blood embrues the bit, pestiferous steams
 Poison the air, and a malignant foam
 Drops on th' infected earth. Fast fly the nymphs: 250
 Fair Proserpine is hurried to the car,
 Imploring aid. Minerva straight prepares
 Her Gorgon shield, and Dian for the strife
 Prepares her bended bow; scorning to yield
 Though to the brother of their sire: to arms 255
 The cause of injured maidenhood excites;
 Calls for redress, and doubles the foul crime

Of Pluto. He, like some fierce lion, stands,
 When, seizing on the fairest of the herd,
 He rends his victim, terrible in ire, 260
 And shakes, with gore deform'd, his dreadful mane,
 Disdaining the poor shepherd's idle rage.

“ Base ruler of ignoble realms, O worst
 “ Of all thy race,” Minerva cries, “ O say,
 “ Detestable, what frantic fury goads 265
 “ Thy horrid purpose, arm'd with whips and stings !
 “ Why hast thou dared to violate the day,
 “ With thy infernal chariot, from the lakes
 “ Of hell ! monsters compose thy dreadful reign,
 “ Dire shapes, and shadows, and Lethean gloom !— 270
 “ The baleful Furies are thy fittest mates !
 “ Hence, then, from these bright realms of upper day,
 “ Thy brother's right ! hence to thy joyless shades !
 “ Why dost thou mingle dead with living forms !
 “ Why tread, a stranger, on our world !”—She spoke, 275
 And, to restrain the furious steeds, opposed

Her shield, whose Gorgon-snakes uprear'd their crests,
 Loud hissing ; and her jav'lin now was poised
 Ready to strike, and glisten'd on the car.
 Then war, and wild confusion had ensued, 280
 But Jove sent forth into the azure skies
 Th' imperial bird, signal of peace, and own'd
 His future son ; among the rolling clouds
 Loud Hymens thunder'd, and approving flames
 Witness'd the nuptial bond. The goddesses 285
 No more opposed his will : with slacken'd bow
 Latona sigh'd, and thus address'd the maid :
 " O much beloved ! receive our sad farewell !
 " Obedience to a sire forbids our aid ;
 " The arm of fate controuls us. Jove himself 290
 " Hath destined thee, a blooming sacrifice,
 " To silent ghosts : amongst them thou wilt find,
 " Alas ! no pleasing maidens, no meet choir
 " To share thy sports. Why from admiring gods
 " Hath fortune snatch'd thee, and condemn'd the world
 " To bear a load of unavailing grief !— 296

“ No more shall I delight to spread the nets
 “ By wood or cave, or the swift shaft to speed
 “ Wing’d with destruction ; the wild boar shall rage,
 “ And unrestrain’d the savage lion roar. 300
 “ Thee ev’ry grove, and ev’ry hill shall mourn,
 “ Unheard the hunter’s voice at morn or eve :
 “ Apollo, too, shall long deplore thy loss,
 “ And yield no answers from the Delphic shrine.”

Meanwhile the rushing chariot flies apace, 305
 On fiery wheels. Sad Proserpine, with hair
 Loose to the breeze, her woe-fraught bosom beats,
 And thus implores the skies with passion’d tears.

“ Ah why did not thy hand, O cruel sire,
 “ Hurl down some bolt destructive ; ere my youth 310
 “ Should thus descend to unrelenting gloom,
 “ Dead to the world ? Say, from thy sterner mind
 “ Is virtue banish’d, and paternal love ?—
 ‘ What crime awoke this wrath ?—Alas, I ne’er

- " Leagued with thine enemies, when Phlegra raged, 315
 " Terrible in discord ; nor did my hand
 " Advance its aid, when huge Olympus groan'd
 " 'Neath Ossa's pond'rous snows ! What dire offence,
 " Committed, or premeditate, hath doom'd
 " Thy daughter to the joyless shades of death ?— 320
 " Ah, fortunate are they whom milder loves
 " Possess ! they feel, at least, the cheerful beams
 " Of day, the sun's warm splendor ! but to me
 " It is denied to view that glorious orb,
 " Or to preserve my vestal purity : 325
 " That with the light of heav'n is gone !—Alas !
 " The world fades like some vision, and I go,
 " A hopeless captive, in a tyrant's chains.—
 " O evil fate ! O sadly chosen flow'rs !
 " Maternal counsel wantonly despised ! 330
 " O artful Venus !—Thee, dear mother, now
 " In Ida's vale the horrid Phrygian rites,
 " With pipe and dreadful song, detain ; or else
 " On Dindyma thou hear'st the frantic yells

“ And clashing weapons of the blood-stain’d priests :—

“ O leave thine altars—hasten to my aid, 336

“ And stop this cruel robber’s hated speed !”

Moved by her tender and imploring grief,

The sullen God breathed the soft sighs of love,

The first he ever knew ; and down his cheeks 340

Flow’d strange relenting tears, while thus he soothed,

In gentle accents, the sad captive’s woe :

“ Dispel, O Proserpine, the grief that rends

“ Thy anxious breast, and chase thy needless fears :

“ Extended empire shall be thine ; for fate 345

“ Hath made thee bride to no inferior pow’r.

“ I am that son of Saturn whom the realms

“ Of Chaos own, and all the lower worlds

“ Obey. Think not to thee the light of day

“ For ever lost : we own a glorious sun ; 350

“ And other stars adorn our firmament,

“ With purest splendor. How wilt thou admire

“ The beaming radiance of Elysian skies ;

Claud.

D

- " The fragrant groves ; their bright inhabitants !
 " With us that happy state, that golden age, 355
 " Perpetual is found ; which men enjoy'd
 " But once. Thy presence fairer meads await,
 " Than these of earth, where fadeless flow'rs arise,
 " Such as thy Enna never knew, and scent
 " The softer gales : there also blooms a tree 360
 " Whose loaded branches hang with shining gold.—
 " All these are thine ; and each rich Autumn still
 " Shall swell thy glitt'ring stores.—Why should I name
 " Such lowly off'rings ! all that floats in air,
 " Or swims the sea, or stately walks the earth, 365
 " Whatever animates the changeful globe,
 " Shall crown thy full possession ; all that lives
 " Within the bounds that Nature has prescribed
 " To mortal being ! Monarchs shall appear
 " Before thee, spoil'd of regal ornament, 370
 " And undistinguish'd from the vulgar crowd :
 " Death renders all men equal. Thou shalt judge
 " The guilty ; and thy hand shall give the meed

" To virtue ; for at thy tribunal none
 " Shall dare conceal the actions of their life. 375
 " The Fates shall be thy handmaids ; and the pow'rs
 " That rule o'er Lethe's waters shall become
 " Subservient to thee. Thy will alone
 " Shall sway the force of Destiny, till now
 " Immutable." He spoke, and his dark steeds 380
 Encouraged : proudly they obey, and soon
 With slacken'd pace at Tænarus arrive.

And now the pallid ghosts in those waste realms
 Assemble ; numerous as fallen leaves,
 Or sands, or waves, moved by autumnal gales. 385
 The dead of ev'ry age haste on to view
 The matchless bride. Soft'ning to placid smiles
 His rigid brow, unlike his former self,
 Pluto appears. To greet his coming lord,
 Huge Phlegethon arises, curling flames 390
 Hang on his beard, and play around his face.
 The duteous multitude bestow their aid,

Some hasten to the car, and loose the reins,
 And to the well-known pasture turn the steeds ;
 Some pictur'd tap'stry spread, and interweave 395
 The bridal bow'r, and range the nuptial robes.


Elysian matrons tend their beauteous queen,
 Soothing with gentle speech her anxious breast ;
 They bind her scatter'd locks, and, chased by fear,
 Restore the roses to her marble cheeks. 400
 The realms of death rejoice, and buried forms
 Are moved to gladness ; pallid spectres taste
 The genial banquet, and the sullen shades
 Quaff the inspiring bowl with garlands crown'd.
 Unwonted melody steals through the gloom ; 405
 And songs are heard where dreadful silence dwelt.
 Hush'd is each lamentable sound of woe ;
 Stern Erebus relents his fiercer mood,
 And glimm'ring twilight cheers eternal Night.
 No longer Minos from th' uncertain urn 410
 Deals various fate ; no longer punishments

Are known, nor shrieks, nor doleful cries ; the wheel
 Torments no more Ixion's gory shape,
 Nor flies the cool wave from the burning lip
 Of Tantalus : released Ixion rests, 415
 And Tantalus the grateful liquor drinks.
 And freed at length from the ensanguined plain,
 Tityus huge his weary bulk uprears,
 Which cover'd late nine acres of the ground ;
 While the fierce vulture quits his mangled breast 420
 Grieving that now the victim's life no more
 Shall glut his famish'd beak. The Furies dance,
 Forgetful of the scourge the guilty need,
 Draining the goblet ; and their snaky brood,
 Moisten'd with wine, play o'er the flowing cups, 425
 With mitigated rage. Ætherial fire
 Supplies the nuptial torch. Now o'er the stream
 Of slow Avernus birds rejoicing rise,
 And sacred pow'rs appease each stormy blast ;
 Whirlpools grow calm : the floods of Acheron 430
 Are changed to milky tides, and with the juice


Of gay Lyæus flows Cocytus' stream.
 The Fates then broke no thread of life ; no voice
 Of woe resounded ; no sad parents wept
 Upon their children's bier : Death walk'd no more 435
 Abroad. The seaman perish'd not by wreck,
 Nor warriors by the sword ; cities were free
 From fun'ral rites ; and Hell's grim ferryman
 With woven reeds adorn'd his rugged locks,
 And, leaping on his idle oar, beguiled 440
 His leisure with a song. Now Hesperus
 Descended to th' infernal shades, and led
 The virgin to the bridal bow'r. Night stood
 Attendant, in bright constellations robed,
 And glitt'ring stars ; while happiest omens shed 445
 Their kindly influence ; applauses rung
 Around ; and wakeful melodies, in notes
 Of soft congratulation, breathed these sounds :—

“ Fair queen of these wide realms, and thou, dread
 pow'r,

“ Allied to Jove, O taste what purest bliss 450
“ Attends the sweet repose of nuptial hours !
“ Confide in mutual love ! a blooming race
“ Nature expects : an offspring shall be born
“ To grace our world with fresh divinity,
“ And recompense sad Ceres for her loss.” 455



END OF BOOK II.



THE
RAPE OF PROSERPINE.

BOOK III.

THE
RAPE OF PROSERPINE.

Book III

MEANWHILE in heav'n the Thunderer's command
Bade Iris, vested in ethereal hues,
Assemble from the thickly-peopled globe
Each deity of earth and sea. She tracks
The painted air, more swift than viewless winds, 5
And calls the sea-gods from their dripping caves,
And summons ev'ry nymph from fountain cool,
Clear lake, and flowing brook. Around they throng,
Amazed ; solicitous to learn what cause
Disturbs their quiet, what high purport moves 10

Such sudden visitation : soon they gain,
 Obedient to the will of Jove, the roofs
 That blaze with starry fires. Order arranged
 The courts : celestial beings sat enthroned,
 Supreme amid the bright revolving spheres ; 15
 Next in succession rank'd the gods who sway
 The fluctuating deep, Nerëus calm,
 And Phorcus white with age ; the lowest place
 Glaucus obtain'd, and Proteus, changeful now
 No more ; nor to the elder of those pow'rs, 20
 Who roll majestic rivers, were denied
 Seats in the bright abodes : but, circling far,
 The youthful genii of inferior streams,
 Innumerable, stood ; the Naiads lean'd
 Upon their kindred urns, and gazing Fauns 25
 In silence wonder'd at the glorious scene.

Then, rising from his awful throne, thus spake
 The sire of gods and men : “ Mortal affairs
 “ Engage once more our thoughts, somewhat of late

- “ By us neglected, since the slothful age 30
 “ Of Saturn chain’d the world in dull repose ;
 “ Yet ’twas our wisdom that decreed mankind
 “ Should feel th’ invigorating cares of life,
 “ To rouse them, slumb’ring. Therefore we forbade
 “ The golden fields to bear spontaneous grain ; 35
 “ Nor stored, for careless indolence, the woods
 “ With nectar’d honey ; fountains yielded not
 “ The grape’s delicious juice, nor madd’ning draughts
 “ Were idly quaff’d from ev’ry mountain-stream.
 “ Nor envy moved this harshness ; for the gods 40
 “ Abhor that evil sentiment : but why
 “ Should Virtue be enslaved with luxury ;
 “ Or gifts, pernicious in their fulness, damp
 “ The mind’s clear energy ! the slothful soul,
 “ Urged by Necessity, awakes and tries 45
 “ Each various path, each hidden art explores ;
 “ And Industry improves, what Genius plans !
 “ But Nature now is urgent in complaint,

- “ And, anxious for the mortal race, declares
 “ Our reign strict tyranny ; and praising still 50
 “ The ages overflown, deems us severe,
 “ Rich in our own abundance, to deny
 “ Sufficient comfort to our needy sons :—
 “ ‘ Why, with unfertilizing hand,’—“ she cries,”
 “ ‘ Fill you these meads with briars, and consume 55
 “ ‘ My plains with thirst ? ah ! why no longer crown
 “ ‘ Th’ autumnal year with fruits ! Lo ! I, who late
 “ ‘ Was bounteous as a mother to the world,
 “ ‘ Now like some cold and thrifty step-dame seem
 “ ‘ Severely prudent !—Wherefore bid ye soar 60
 “ ‘ Man’s thoughtful spirit ! wherefore lift his head
 “ ‘ Erect in majesty ; if pathless wilds
 “ ‘ He roams in search of food, like wand’ring herds,
 “ ‘ And shares with them their acorns ! Such a life,
 “ ‘ Participate with brutes who howl in dens, 65
 “ ‘ And sylvan caves, affords no joy to man !’—
 “ While thus I listen’d to the fond complaint
 “ Of Nature’s voice, my clemency awoke,

- “ And urged me to relieve her abject state.
 “ Therefore have I decreed that Ceres, who, 70
 “ With her stern mother, now on Ida stays,
 “ Unconscious of her woes, through all the world,
 “ Anxious, and wild with grief, shall roam, until
 “ Her lost delight she find : Plenty meanwhile,
 “ Attendant on her car, shall scatter round 75
 “ The golden ear, unknown on earth before ;
 “ And the swift, fiery-footed dragons give
 “ Blooming fertility to ev’ry plain.
 “ But if among the gods one traitor-voice
 “ Shall dare betray to Ceres, Pluto’s name : 80
 “ By the eternal concord of the spheres
 “ I swear, e’en though the partner of our throne
 “ Should prove th’ offending pow’r—although my mind
 “ Had been a womb to the betrayer—still
 “ My dread immortal fury he should feel, 85
 “ Stricken with thunder, and, sore wounded, grieve
 “ That his ethereal essence could not die :
 “ Then, cast a groaning victim to the shades,

" A heavier punishment awaits his crime,
 " From hell's avenging pow'r. Such is the will 90
 " Of Fate, and we approve her firm decree."

He spoke, and shook his star-encircled brows,
 And fill'd the heav'nly concave with dismay.

But omens now of evil tendency,
 To thoughtful Ceres in her distant caves, 95
 Wild and uncertain signs, appear'd ; each night
 Her tearful eyes seem'd to bewail in dreams
 Her daughter dead. Oft, in the mystic rites,
 The steel she brandishes assaults her breast ;
 And oft, in speechless horror, she perceives 100
 Her sacred vestments change to funeral robes ;
 While barren trees within the temple bloom.

A sacred laurel, too, the fav'rite plant
 Of all the grove, whose chaste and verdant leaf
 The maidens loved, to shade their nuptial bow'rs ; 105

Uptorn, and sever'd from its root she finds :
 And the sad Fauns th' inquiring goddess tell,
 That some dire Fury, from Tartarean shades,
 Had spoil'd the beauty of her lovely tree.

At length, no more mysteriously veil'd, 110
 In doubtful slumbers, the acknowledged shape
 Of Proserpine appals the mother's sleep ;
 For in a cave forlorn she saw her sit,
 In bonds and hideous darkness ; not that maid
 Whom late, embosom'd in the isle, she left ; 115
 Nor with that beauty graced, which rivall'd well,
 In Enna's flow'ry and enchanting vale,
 Th' admiring goddesses : loaded with gold
 Shone her encircled hair, and gloomy night
 Added strange lustre to her sterner eyes ; 120
 Dead was the rose upon her cheek, illumed
 With other fires, and all her air betray'd
 Infectious gloom. Affrighted Ceres scarce
 Dared trust the mournful vision, yet at length,

Claud.

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By dread anxiety compell'd, these words, 125

Mingled with frequent sighs, escaped her lips :

“ What crime awakes this punishment ! O whence

“ This spectre horrible ? from whom proceeds

“ The hateful work of cruelty ! O say,

“ Terrific form, art thou indeed my child ? 130

“ Or does some idle phantom of the night,

“ Thus, with unreal terrors, shake my soul ? ”

“ O parent ! ” mournfully the shade replied,

“ Hast thou become oblivious of my fate,

“ Neglectful of my wrongs ? quenching that love 135

“ With most unnatural hate, which Nature gives

“ E'en to the lion's dam ! Ah me ! so soon,

“ Thy only offspring, to be thus despised !

“ Sweet to thine ear was once my fav'rite name :

“ Now see thy Proserpine in this deep gulf 140

“ Enchain'd, and with unceasing grief oppress'd !

“ Thy heedless hours, meanwhile, rude choirs engage,

“ Mad revelry ; e'en now the cities ring

“ Responsive to thy songs. But if thy soul

“ Reject not utterly a mother’s care ; 145

“ If, Ceres, I derive from thee my life,

“ And was not nursed by tigers,—O relieve

“ My wearied nature from this dreadful gloom,

“ And bring me back to light ; or, if the Fates

“ Forbid return, visit, at least, thy child 15

“ In these lone caves ! ” Tears ended her address ;

Her trembling hands she now essay’d to raise,

In lowly supplication ; but her bonds

Made vain the effort ; and the rattling chains

Waked Ceres from her sleep, with horror chill’d :— 155

’Twas but th’ unreal action of a dream,

And some relief she feels ; yet still she longs

For Proserpine’s embrace : with anxious thoughts

Wildly she hasten’d from her troubled couch,

And thus majestic Cybele address’d : 160

“ No longer, goddess, in these groves I stay ;

“ Me other cares demand. My treasured hope,

- “ Though placed in guarded halls, rear’d by the toil
 “ Of Vulcan’s slaves, I dread to lose ; trembling
 “ Lest insecurity defeat my cares, 165
 “ Or fame betray. Trinacria, methinks,
 “ Affords not sure concealment ; for report,
 “ Praising her wild and grand sublimity,
 “ Leads to her shores th’ advent’rous traveller ;
 “ And sad Enceladus, with sighs and groans, 170
 “ Renders the lovely isle no fit abode
 “ For secrecy or silence : other bowers,
 “ In some less known, some solitary clime,
 “ Must be explored. Dire visions have disturb’d
 “ My slumbers ; omens, and ill-boding signs : 175
 “ Each day my fear encreases : these bright locks
 “ Fall from my head profuse, and drops of blood,
 “ Portentous, stain my bosom ; gushing tears
 “ Wash, with unbidden grief, my pallid cheeks,
 “ And, moved by some strange sympathy, my hands 180
 “ Beat my unconscious breast ; if I attempt
 “ The breathing of the pipe, its melody

- " Seems like some fun'ral dirge, and when I strike
 " The timbrel, harsh and mournful are the sounds.
 " Ah me ! I tremble lest these signs imply 185
 " Some horrible calamity ! Alas,
 " What ills delay may breed !"—" Give to the winds
 " These idle terrors," Cybele rejoin'd,
 " Nor so unwatchful deem the sire of heav'n,
 " As to neglect his daughter : lightning keen 190
 " Would blast the hand of violence. Yet go ;
 " And hither, with unclouded front, return."

This heard, Ceres in haste ascends her car,
 And urges on, with undeserved lash,
 The swiftness of the steeds ; her eager eyes 195
 Expect the distant shores of Sicily,
 Ere Ida's woods have faded from their view :
 Grief loads her swelling heart, augments her fears,
 Extinguishes all hope. So homeward late
 Th' empassion'd bird from search of food returns, 200
 Anxious, and pond'ring o'er the various ills

That may betide her tender brood ; she dreads
 Lest storms have torn her humble nest ; or man,
 With furtive cruelty ; or gilded snake.
 Now the neglected dwelling meets her eye ; 205
 Fled are its guardians, and the careless gates
 Wide open ; melancholy stillness reigns
 Around—silent destruction ! At this sight,
 In wild amazement, Ceres rends her robes,
 And casts her golden chaplet on the ground ; 210
 Tears rush into her eyes ; no speech her tongue,
 No life her cheek, betrays ; with falt'ring steps,
 And trembling, through the halls and lonely courts
 She hastes, and soon perceives the gorgeous woof,
 With threads neglected and confused, and marks 215
 The intercepted labor of the loom :
 The costly work seem'd perishing, and o'er
 Th' unfinish'd vacancy, the spider's art
 Had drawn unhallow'd lines. Deep is her woe,
 And silent ; on the senseless web she prints 220
 Fond kisses, and her mute affliction pours

Upon the moisten'd colors ; to her breast
 She folds each dear memorial of her child ;
 Each scatter'd implement of pleasing toil ;
 And mournfully surveys the spot where late 225
 She sate beside her loom,—her couch forlorn,—
 Her desolated bed. So grieves the swain,
 Whose lowing treasure lions have destroy'd,
 Or banded robbers hurried to their caves ;
 Too late returning to his ravaged fields, 230
 Amazed he roves the empty pasture through,
 And calls upon his lost and silent herd.

Conceal'd within a deep recess she finds,
 Electra laid, sad remnant of the house ;
 Her daughter's aged nurse, the most renown'd 235
 Of Ocean's train ; she ever had supplied
 Its tender nutriment, and fondly led
 The sportive infant to the knees of Jove ;
 And still in her the virgin had possess'd
 A guardian and companion : prostrate now, 240

With hair dishevell'd, in the dust, she mourns
 The lost etherial maid. Ceres at length
 Yields utt'rance to her grief, by heaviest sighs,
 And tears accompanied : " what mischief now,"
 Wildly she asks, " appals my troubled sight ? 245
 " Is Jove supreme in heav'n, or do the sons
 " Of Titan reign ? What hand presumptuous dared,
 " While thunders dwelt above, madly attempt
 " This violence ? Is fell Typhœus loose ?
 " Has rash Vesuvius the giant freed, 250
 " That groan'd beneath his pressure ? or, more near,
 " From Etna's jaws hath huge Enceladus
 " Escaped ? perhaps dark Briarëus stole,
 " With sudden fury, on our household gods !—
 " O where, alas ! where is my daughter now ? 255
 " Where all her thousand nymphs attendant ? where
 " Is Cyan ? say, what demon has dispersed
 " The guardian-maids ? Is this, alas, your care ?
 " Is this your long fidelity approved ?"
 Trembles the aged nurse ; a transient shame 260

Glows on her faded cheek ; she longs for death
 To close her eyes, unable to endure
 The grief depicted in the mother's face ;
 Immoveable and silent, she delays
 Her doleful tale, till, farther urged, at last 265
 These mournful accents falter on her tongue :
 “ Ah ! would the impious giant-race alone
 “ Had caused this ruin ! but immortal pow'rs
 “ Contrived our unsuspected fall. Thou seest,
 “ What least thou wouldst desire, thy kindred's fraud ;
 “ Their envious hate. Heav'n has become our foe.— 271
 “ A calm tranquillity was ours, nor sought
 “ The maid to rove beyond these peaceful walls,
 “ Nor sigh'd for flow'ry vales, or open skies,
 “ Obedient to thy will. The loom supplied 275
 “ Her toils, and Sirens sung her to repose ;
 “ With me each grateful hour, in converse sweet,
 “ Unheeded past ; beside her couch I watch'd,
 “ When Sleep diffused his poppies, and each sport
 “ Within these bounds, my vigilance made safe. 280

- “ But suddenly behold the queen of love,
 “ All unsuspected of fallacious art,
 “ With friendly aspect to our dwelling came,
 “ And to ensure our greater confidence,
 “ Versed in deceit, she Dian with her led, 285
 “ And wise Minerva ; with alluring smiles
 “ She sought to win the artless Proserpine ;
 “ Embraced her, and the name of sister breathed
 “ With soft affection, mingling fond complaint
 “ That cruel Ceres in these lonely shades 290
 “ Such beauty could immure, far from her bow’rs
 “ Paternal, the resplendent courts of Jove,
 “ And all the blest society of heav’n.
 “ The virgin they delight with choicest fruits,
 “ Selected from Pomona’s lap, and crown 295
 “ The board with nectar. She with Dian’s robes
 “ Now sportively attires her form, and grasps
 “ The bow, with tender fingers ; now admires
 “ The crested helm, and as Minerva smiles,
 “ She fills it with her rich luxuriant hair, 300

- “ And strives to raise the pond’rous mooned shield.
 “ Venus meanwhile, with fraudulent intent,
 “ Malicious, speaks of Enna’s lovely vale
 “ And blooming bow’rs, and asks, as ignorant,
 “ What gifts peculiar that spot adorn ; 305
 “ Nor does she seem to credit that the gales
 “ Of winter breathe innocuous on the rose,
 “ Mild as the airs of Spring ; or that the buds
 “ Of summer flourish through the live-long year,
 “ Unvisited by angry storms : awhile 310
 “ Enwrapp’d in pleasing wonder she appears ;
 “ Then, with feign’d eagerness, requests the maid
 “ To lead her to those beauteous scenes. O youth !
 “ Alas, too easily beguiled ! What pray’rs,
 “ What unavailing sorrows did I breathe ! 315
 “ Yet she departed—to dissembled love,
 “ And cruel sisters trusting. On her steps
 “ Each nymph attended. To the meads they haste,
 “ Which ever with unfading verdure smile,
 “ And pluck the flow’rs beneath the dawning light, 320

- “ When the fresh earth is gemm’d with dew-drops clear
 “ And violets drink the coolness of the morn.
 “ But when more high the radiant sun had roll’d
 “ His glowing axle, suddenly dark night 324
 “ Shadow’d the isle ; loud trampling hoofs were heard,
 “ And rushing wheels, that shook the trembling ground :
 “ Unknown to us the dreadful charioteer ;
 “ Some slaught’ring power, or Death himself, stern king.
 “ A with’ring paleness smote the fertile glebe,
 “ The brooks were dried, the fruitful fields despoil’d ; 330
 “ Nothing survived the blast : I saw decay
 “ Steal on the fragrant beauty of the rose ;
 “ The lily languish’d, and each flow’ret droop’d.
 “ Soon with terrific sound the wheels retired,
 “ Attendant Night withdrew, and usual beams 335
 “ Revisited the cheerful face of day :
 “ But Proserpine return’d not to our arms.
 “ Their end obtain’d, the Goddesses forsook
 “ The wasted valley. On the earth we found
 “ Sad Cyan lifeless, pale her drooping head, 340

- “ And black the perish’d garland on her brow.
 “ Quick we approach, and of her mistress’ fate
 “ Enquire, for Cyan nearest stood, and ask
 “ What steeds were those, and who their dreadful Lord?
 “ She answer’d not, but, yielding to her fate, 345
 “ And touch’d with secret poison, pined away,
 “ Changed to a fountain pure ; her tresses bright
 “ Dissolved in silent streams, and gelid drops
 “ Fell from each wasting limb ; till at our feet
 “ No more a nymph, she flow’d a crystal flood. 350
 “ The train disperse ; and borne on rapid wings
 “ The Sirens seek the bay where lifted high
 “ Pelorus looks upon the waves ; they strike
 “ Their alter’d lyres, incensed, to fatal airs,
 “ And measures fraught with sad calamity ; 355
 “ Each wand’ring bark their songs detain, and oars
 “ Grow motionless to listen : I alone,
 “ O’ercome with age and grief, am left at home.”

Doubt and amazement fearfully distract

The soul of Ceres ; madly she consumes 360
 With rage, as if the robber were at hand,
 And unperform'd the deed : her phrenzied eyes
 Seem to assail th' inhabitants of heav'n.

So the Hyrcanian tigress breathes her ire,
 On high Niphates, when her helpless brood 365
 The pale and trembling hunter steals away,
 To grace the pageantry of Eastern kings :
 Madly she rushes forth with volant speed,
 And all her anger in her greener spots
 Displays ; but just as her devouring jaws 370
 Threaten the ravisher with horrid fate,
 She views her image in the crystal orb,
 His art prepares, and ceases the pursuit.
 Not otherwise, through all Olympus' shades,
 The irritated mother rages loud, 375
 Demanding retribution : " think not me
 " Sprung from an earthly deity ;" she cries,
 " To Saturn, and majestic Cybele,

- “ I owe my birth. Where are your slumb’ring laws,
 “ O ye immortal rulers of the globe ! 380
 “ What now shall piety avail ! behold,
 “ Venus, so famed for chastity, intrudes
 “ Unblushingly upon the wond’ring day,
 “ After her Lemnian chains. Could that chaste bed,
 “ That innocent repose devise my wrongs ! 385
 “ Those pure embraces !—let dishonor now
 “ In her no more be strange, or wonder’d at.
 “ But why did ye, who shun the nuptial bow’r,
 “ Forsake a helpless virgin ? why, alas !
 “ Neglected ye those attributes ye love ? 390
 “ Do ye now aid the cause of violence,
 “ And join with Cytherea ? ye should both
 “ Be worshipp’d in the Scythian’s barb’rous fane,
 “ Whose horrid altars thirst for human blood !
 “ What moved your fury ? could my Proserpine 395
 “ Slight you with sparing sacrifice ? O say,
 “ Diana, did she chase thee from thy grove ;
 “ Or thee, Minerva, from the tented field ?

- “ Or were her pray’rs too frequent ? did she vex
 “ Your wearied temples with abundant vows ?— 400
 “ No ! in Trinacria’s lonely isle she dwelt,
 “ And could not tire your sovereign deities.
 “ Alas ! what good from all my care hath sprung ?
 “ Not humble quiet, nor retired abodes
 “ Are safe from envy and malicious hate.” 405
 Thus she addresses all the Gods, but they,
 In reverence of Jove, or silence keep,
 Or knowledge of the deed disclaim ; with tears
 Answ’ring the mother’s grief : what now remains ?
 Once more, submissive, she renews her plaint, 410
 In lowly supplication : “ O forgive
 “ If virtue into seeming passion fall :
 “ Anger ill suits the pleading voice ! O hear
 “ My sad request ! O grant this only prayer :
 “ Expose me not to doubtful miseries ! 415
 “ Let me but know what shapes of grief are mine.
 “ Whate’er ye may appoint, that can I bear,
 “ If conscious, and the dispensation call

- " Fortune's appointment, not your cruelty.
 " O grant me but a sight of her I mourn, 420
 " I'll strive not to regain her ! Rest secure,
 " Whoe'er thou art, dread ravisher ; I yield
 " To thee possession, and confirm thy prize.
 " But if by vows prevented, ye, who join'd
 " In aid, keep silence, O Latona, thou 425
 " At least may'st tell : Diana hath in thee
 " Perhaps confided : well thou know'st what love,
 " What anxious fears oppress a parent's heart :
 " Thee two fair offspring hail ; I own but one.
 " Ah, speak ! so shalt thou never be deprived 430
 " Of golden-hair'd Apollo ; so shall I
 " Possess through thee some shadow of relief."

Still her immortal auditors reply

- In silent tears alone. " What ! can ye weep
 " So much, and yet be silent to my grief ?— 435
 " Alas ! they leave me. Wherefore now prolong
 " A vain delay, O Ceres ? see'st thou not,

Claud.

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- “ Too plainly, that the Gods refuse thee aid ?
 “ Should'st thou not rather seek thy daughter lost,
 “ Through earth and all the seas ? Lo ! I prepare 440
 “ To compass round the globe ! my feet untired
 “ Shall visit every dim recess : no hour
 “ Of intermission, no repose, no sleep
 “ Shall seal my eyes till her I find, though hid
 “ In the deep bosom of th' Iberian sea, 445
 “ Or whelm'd beneath the ruby tide that laves
 “ The shores of Araby ; not the pale snows
 “ On Renus, or Ripheus, shall prevent
 “ My eager search, nor the more dreadful heat
 “ Of dubious Syrtis ; to th' extremest bounds, 450
 “ Where reigns the fiery South, my course shall stretch,
 “ And pierce the frozen limits of the North ;
 “ In th' utmost West my blazing torch shall rouse
 “ Pale Atlas ; and Hydaspe's wave remote
 “ Shall brighten with its beams. Relentless Jove 455
 “ My wand'rings sad, through waste, through peopled
 “ realms,

" Calmly may view ; while Juno fears no more
 " Her rival lost. Insult then o'er my grief,
 " Ye deities who reign in heaven supreme,
 " And boast your glorious triumph o'er my child." 460
 She spoke, and hasten'd to the well-known shades
 Of gloomy Etna, eager to prepare
 The torches for her nightly wand'ring toil:

Near golden Acis, (in whose sparkling wave,
 More than the Ocean loved, her snowy limbs, 465
 Fair Galatea bathes,) there stands a grove
 Cooling with grateful shade tall Etna's side.
 And there, 'tis said, after his conquest won,
 Heav'n's mighty ruler threw his ægis down,
 With gore empurpled, and his captived foes 470
 Bore on his shoulders ; with their slaughter'd forms
 He deck'd the horrid grove, and hung around,
 Dire witness of his triumph, ghastly shapes,
 And all the monstrous relics of the slain.
 Some countenance of vengeful fury glares 475

From ev'ry tree ; in whitening heaps around
 Huge serpent bones are laid, and blacken'd skins
 By thunder blasted ; ev'ry loaded branch
 Boasts of some glorious name : here bends a trunk
 Beneath the hundred swords and clenched hands 480
 Of fierce Ægeon's corse ; another vaunts
 The pale and livid form of ghastly Cœus ;
 Here hangs the spear of Mimas ; and the spoils
 Of huge Ophion. But a shadowy pine,
 Ample and tall, o'er all the rest exalts 485
 The boasted trophies of earth's mightiest son,
 Wrathful Enceladus ; and lest the tree
 Should bend o'erloaded with its weight, an oak
 Lends it more firm support. Rev'rence and fear
 Protect the sacred spot, and keep unharm'd 490
 These trophies of the Gods : there feed no flocks,
 No wand'ring Cyclop dares molest the shade,
 And Polypheme himself avoids the grove.

Ceres that place respects not ; anger checks

Her piety ; she hurls the wasteful axe 495
 Around, regardless, ready to assault
 E'en Jove himself : the pine she levels low,
 And throws the stately cedar to the ground.
 The fittest trunks she chooses, and essays,
 With proving hand, the strength of ev'ry stem, 500
 And tries the nature of each pliant bough.

So he who structures the tall ship, to bear
 His costly merchandise o'er distant seas,
 Intent on safety, fells the shady beech,
 The alder straight, and ev'ry various wood 505
 Applies to separate uses ; to his sails
 He gives the slender, to his lofty mast
 The stronger trunk ; he chooses for his oar
 The toughest plant ; and the more solid beam
 Shapes to the fashion of the steady keel. 510

Two cypresses uprear'd their leafy heads,
 High o'er the shaded turf, inviolate ;

Such upon Ida's rocks Simoïs' stream
 Beholds not, nor Orontes' richer wave,
 Protector of the grove Apollo loves ; 515
 Twin-born they seem'd, so near their forms were
 match'd,
 Scorning with beauteous pride the baser wood.
 These Ceres marks approving, and invades
 With cruel steel their bark-encompass'd sides ;
 Each tree by turns she strikes, and all her force 520
 Exerts against their trembling life : at length
 They fall, and hide together in the dust
 Their sullied honors, prostrate on the plain ;
 Deplored by Fauns and Dryads. In her hands,
 Each fallen tree, vested with all its boughs, 525
 The Goddess bears, waves them on high, and speeds
 With furious pace, and tresses wildly free,
 To Etna's summit, breathing lurid flames :
 The fiery exhalation she disdains,
 And pathless rocks surmounts and torrid sands. 530

So fierce Megæra hasten'd to illumine
 Her torch of deadly yew ; to fire the walls
 Of Cadmus, or Thyestes' mournful tow'rs :
 The sullen ghosts gave place, and tortured fiends
 Rejoiced, whilst by the burning lake she stood, 535
 And with abundant streams inflamed her brand.

Ceres, the mountain's blazing summit gain'd,
 Plunges th' inverted trees within its jaws ;
 Their spreading branches choak th' illumin'd gulf,
 And the strong breathing of the flames obstruct ; 540
 Groans Mulciber oppress'd ; loud thunders shake
 The cavern'd hill ; the cypress buds grow bright,
 With sparkling sulphur fired ; and Etna's self
 Emits unusual radiance o'er the isle.

Then, lest these lights should fail, ere her tired feet 545
 Complete their task, quenchless and pure she bids
 Their splendor ever live ; sprinkling the wood
 With such rare dew as swift Apollo takes

To bathe his burning wheels, and Dian sheds
 Upon her horned yoke. And now, still Night 550
 Unfolding to the earth her shadowy veil,
 Ceres her search commences, sighing deep,
 And thus, with wounded bosom, pours her plaint :

“ These dismal torches, Proserpine, for thee
 “ I did not think to bear ; but rather hoped 555
 “ To light thy nuptial bow’r ; thy songs of joy
 “ To witness ; hymens pealing to the skies.
 “ Lo ! are immortals thus by fate pursued,
 “ And, with the indiscriminating rage
 “ Of Lachesis o’erwhelm’d ? How was I wont 560
 “ Proudly to bear me ; by an humble train
 “ Surrounded, suing for my daughter’s love !
 “ What fruitful parent did not yield to me,
 “ Rich in a single pledge ! Thou wert my first,
 “ My sole delight ; my last, my chiefest care ; 565
 “ In thee I seem’d to own a num’rous race.
 “ O sweet maternal pride ! O love ! O state

“ Of fond security ! my lofty step
 “ Outrivall’d Juno’s ; nor my dignity
 “ Nor grace inferior ; now detested, vile : 570
 “ So Jove ordains. But why do we ascribe
 “ To him the cause ! I, I alone, dear maid,
 “ Thy cruel enemy, bore thee away ;
 “ Deserted thee ; exposed thy helpless youth.
 “ The hoarse-voiced bacchant through the dance I led,
 “ And yoked the Phrygian lions to my car, 576
 “ Rejoicing o’er the plains, e’en while the foe
 “ Was busy at thy life. Ah, witness now
 “ My punishment, so well deserved : behold,
 “ I rend my cheeks, and on my breast inflict 580
 “ These bleeding wounds to expiate my crime !

“ Where shall I seek thee ! in what clime remote,
 “ What unknown region ! who shall guide my steps,
 “ Who point the untried path ! What dreadful car
 “ Bore thee away ; what ravisher ! of earth 585
 “ Inhabitant, or sea ! how shall I trace

“ His rapid wheels !—Alas ! where’er my feet
 “ Uncertain lead, I go, following blind fate :
 “ So her lost offspring sad Dione sought.

“ Shall toil extreme suffice ! shall I once more, 590
 “ O daughter dear, embrace thee ? yet remains
 “ Thy beauty’s charm, thy cheek’s resplendent hue ?
 “ Or, too unhappy, shall I find thee such
 “ As late when stealing on the fearful night,
 “ Ghastly and pale, thou visited’st my dreams ?” 595

She spoke, and from the caves of Etna turn’d ;
 The sadly perish’d flow’rs, and ev’ry sign
 Of pale destruction, through the wasted plains
 She follows, and illumines all around
 With searching light ; bearing her torches low. 600
 Her tears bedew the earth ; her mournful plaints
 Resound on ev’ry side. She tracks the sea
 With gleaming fires, that dance upon the floods,
 And give to Italy, and Lybia’s sands,

Far distant splendor ; while th' Etruscan shores 605
Grow bright, and Syrtis kindles its dark waves :
She seeks the cave of Scylla, half whose brood,
Astonish'd, hush their barking jaws, while half,
Yet undismay'd, their threat'ning cries encrease.

RELIQUA DESIDERANTUR.

RUFINUS.

BOOK I.

RECEIVED

1880

RUFINUS.

BOOK I.

Introduction.

WHEN on the Cirrhan plain Apollo's shaft
Victorious pierced the dreadful Python's side,
Hugest of monsters, whose envenom'd folds
Circled the hills, while down his cavern'd throat
Rivers affrighted fled; whose sanguined crest

5

With impious rage was lifted to the stars :
 Freed from the horrid pest, Parnassus waved
 More gay her laughing groves ; the mountain ash
 Securely to the gale disclosed its leaves ;
 And smooth Cephisus, whose translucent stream 10
 The giant reptile had impoison'd oft,
 Roll'd clear his flood. The woods, the hills, the plains
 Resounded with the cries of joy ; each voice
 Sung the great victor's praise ; while in her fane
 The Sybil trembled with unusual fire ; 15
 And as the Muses charm'd the listening air
 With distant melodies, the host of heaven
 Descended upon earth. So as my song
 Records another Python slain, I see
 A sacred band attentive to my lyre 20
 Who peace and justice to the world dispense,
 And execute th' Augustan princes' will.

RUFINUS.

Book I.

OF^T had my anxious mind revolved the thought,
Uncertain, whether the celestial powers
Bestow'd their care upon this lower world ;
Or whether, guided by no higher hand,
The tide of mortal things, blind chance alone 5
Directed. For when erst I ponder'd o'er
The wise obedience of the subject globe
To certain laws ; the seasons' changeful lapse ;
And day and night's vicissitude, I saw
The mighty traces of a pow'rful God, 10

Claud.

G

Who bade the stars in beauteous order move ;
 And o'er the fruitful earth, with lavish hand,
 Threw the rich treasures of the smiling year,
 Gay fruits and painted flow'rs ; who gave the sun
 A native splendor, and to Dian's orb, 15
 Fickle, and pale, beams of reflected light.
 I mark'd how he had stretch'd the bounding shore
 By oceans deep, and this round planet poised
 Upon its axle smooth ; but when I traced
 The fallen state of sublunary things, 20
 And saw how oft among the sons of men,
 The guilty flourish'd, and the pious grieved,
 Again religion in my breast declined,
 And to that sad Philosophy I turn'd,
 Which teaches how the floating atoms met 25
 In the illimitable waste ; how chance,
 Not art, each various shape contrived ; which tells
 That deities in fancy's idle brain
 Are pictured ; and to men, existing not,
 Or utterly unknown. The vengeful doom 30

That on Rufinus fell, dissolved this dream,
 And proved the justice of the Gods. Nor now
 Do I complain that evil men are raised
 To th' utmost heights of fortune : they are borne
 On high to meet but with a heavier fall. 35
 Unfold, ye Muses, whence this monster sprung.

Alecto late, with envy and dismay,
 Observed how all the earth was bless'd with peace :
 Promptly to horrid council she invokes
 Th' infernal sisters, and assembles, swift, 40
 Innumerable shapes of strife, and forms
 Terrific, by dim night, till then, conceal'd
 Within her shadowy cave ; Discord the nurse
 Of war, Famine, and Age near hand to Death ;
 Disease impatient of himself, and, sad 45
 At news of joy, pale Malice ; Sorrow wan,
 Weeping with garments torn ; and ghastly Fear ;
 And proud Audacity with blinded front ;
 And swell'n and wasteful Luxury, whose step,

Still following close, dejected Want attends ; 50
 And ever-wakeful Care, of Avarice born.

They crowd their iron seats ; and the wide courts
 Collected monsters throng. High o'er the rest
 Alecto stands, and the discordant rout

Commands to silence ; while her snaky locks, 55
 From her stern forehead shook, she bids disport
 Innocuous round her shoulders ; then these words
 Impart the hate that struggles in her breast :

“ Shall then this age untroubled pass away,
 “ And nations dwell in order and in peace ? 60

“ Whence this new clemency that mars our reign ?

“ Why harmless falls our rage ? why feebly strikes

“ Our scorpion lash ? why do we raise in vain

“ The torch of strife ? Alas ! weak ministers !

“ Stern Jupiter controls your pow'r in heav'n ; 65

“ Rome's emperor on earth. The golden age

“ Returns, and peace, and antique happiness.

“ Fair Concord, Virtue, and strict Piety,

“ With Faith, walk fearless through the world, and tell

“ Their lofty triumphs loud. O shame! e’en me, 70
 “ As late I glided through the liquid air,
 “ Astrea mock’d, boasting each rooted vice
 “ Pluck’d from the earth, and prison’d justice freed.
 “ And shall we slumber in ignoble ease,
 “ Of all our rights despoil’d? Let us attempt 75
 “ What fits our name; resume our wonted pow’r,
 “ And plan some mischief mightier than our foes.
 “ In Stygian darkness I already seem
 “ To cloud the stars, and tempest all the air;
 “ My hand removes the sea’s strong limits, pours 80
 “ Swift rivers o’er their broken banks, and plagues
 “ All nature with confusion.” Thus the fiend
 Ill-omen’d spake, and shook her horrent hair
 Of living snakes, and scatter’d poison round.
 A doubtful tumult rises; some demand 85
 Fierce war against the Gods; others, more calm,
 For covert strife and home defence contend:
 Rumor upsprings from their dissension. Loud
 The uproar seems, as when the swelling deep,

Yet feels the fury of some recent storm ; 90
 When with the fitful blast the billows strive,
 And, in their heaving agitation, show
 The mighty impulse of the pow'rtul gale.

Next from her ebon seat Megæra sprung ;
 Her, clamors wild, and error still attend, 95
 And pale and foaming Anger. She 'tis drinks,
 With horrid joy, the kindred stream that flows
 When fathers fight with sons—when brothers bleed.
 Her aspect terrified the dauntless soul
 Of calm Alcides, and awoke the rage 100
 Unhallow'd, that polluted all his fame ;
 She gave the spear to Athamas ; and twice,
 In royal Agamemnon's palace, raised
 The hand of slaughter at the festive board,
 And twice opposed the household deities : 105
 Fired too by her was that sad nuptial torch
 Which led Jocasta to her fated son,
 And to Thyestes join'd a daughter bride :—

Now the dread Fury wildly thus began.

- “ O ye associates, I deem the voice, 110
 “ That counsels war with heav’n, unwise and vain ;
 “ But if to spoil the world delight our hate,
 “ To show’r destruction on mankind, I boast
 “ An instrument more dreadful than the worst
 “ Of hydra forms : behold Rufinus, fierce, 115
 “ And subtle as the tigress in her den ;
 “ More violent than whirlwind-storms, than seas
 “ More false and changeable. Him I received,
 “ An infant, stolen from his mother’s arms,
 “ And nursed him in my bosom ; here he oft 120
 “ Hath laid, and twining round my neck, implored
 “ The breast, with tender cries ; these venom’d snakes
 “ Fix’d harmless on his cheeks their lambent tongues.
 “ As he to manhood grew, each fraudulent art
 “ I taught him—how dissimulation’s robe 125
 “ To wear, and how to hide, in hollow smiles,
 “ Each discontented thought, each baleful scheme.
 “ Thirstful of gain, as eager after blood,

- " Not him the wealth of Tagus would content,
 " When torrent floods disturb the sparkling sands ; 130
 " Nor full Pactolus rich with golden ore ;
 " Nor Hermas deep. How skill'd in artifice ;
 " How prone with breath of malice to dissolve
 " The faith of truest friends ! If former times
 " Had such a monster seen, Theseus had fled 135
 " From Pirithous, and Pylades forsook
 " Orestes ; and the twins of Leda changed
 " Their love to hatred. Me he hath surpass'd
 " In vice ; his ready genius soars above
 " Instruction. Why should I prolong the theme ! 140
 " Let it suffice that in himself combine
 " The sev'ral evils we but jointly hold.
 " Him will I straight conduct, so ye approve,
 " E'en to th' imperial chair where sits enthroned
 " Earth's mightiest sov'reign, who shall yield to us, 145
 " And to our fraudulent son, though he were more
 " Than Numa wise, or sacred Minos just."

Clam'rous and wild, the rout profane declare
 Their joy in frantic mood ; and frequent shouts
 Attest high admiration and applause. 150

She with a serpent binds her flowing robe,
 And clasps her locks with adamant, then hastes
 To dismal Phlegethon's resounding stream ;
 And standing on the burning mound that banks
 The flaming torrent, in the sulph'rous waves 155
 Illumes her fatal brand, and o'er the depth
 Of Tartarus expands her rapid' wing.

There lies a spot on Gallia's distant shore,
 Wash'd by the azure tide ; where, it is said,
 Ulysses once allured the silent ghosts, 160
 With dark libations of unhallow'd blood.
 There may be heard, full oft, the plaintive moans
 Of pining shades forlorn, and the light sound
 Of airy pinions flitting on the gale,
 Whilst through the gloom th' affrighted peasant sees 156
 Pale wand'ring shapes, and images of death.

Thence bursts the Fury dire, and dims the rays
 Of Phœbus in her flight, and rends the air
 With loud terrific cry. The fearful shout
 Appals the distant Briton's savage ear, 170
 Shakes the Transalpine plains, checks the swift Rhine,
 And makes the startled sea roll back her tides.
 Then with dissembled years to veil her form,
 Her snakes she changes to the locks of age,
 Imprints deep furrows in her rugged cheeks, 175
 And feigns a feeble step. And now she gains
 Elusa's walls, and seeks the well known roof
 Where dwells Rufinus ; there arrived, long time
 She gazes on the worst of men, with eyes
 Ghastly and wild ; then thus her fraudulent tongue. 180

“ Rufinus, shall inglorious ease delight
 “ Thy wasting hours? shall thy fresh flow'ring youth
 “ Ignobly fade in thy paternal fields?
 “ O dull of soul, the hand of Fate prepares
 “ E'en now thy greatness, wealth, and splendid fame. 185

- " Be but my pow'r consulted, and thy sway,
 " Unrival'd, shall extend o'er all the globe.
 " Spurn not the help of age : to me belong
 " The arts of magic, and that prescient glance
 " Which pierces through futurity ; those strains 190
 " Whose deadly force steals from the radiant moon
 " Her brightness, I have learn'd ; and well can trace
 " The wise Egyptian's lore, in mystic line,
 " Or hieroglyphic rude, and that dark verse
 " Chaldean, which compels the lab'ring Gods 195
 " To work a mortal's will ; nor from my sight
 " Escape those hidden juices which reside,
 " Of dire effect, in tree, or herb, or flow'r,
 " On savage Caucasus, or Scythia's rocks,
 " Pregnant with fatal charms ; such as of old 200
 " Medea chose, and that fair nymph renown'd,
 " Circe, the radiant daughter of the sun.
 " Oft, by the midnight incantation roused,
 " I summon to my aid the pow'rs of hell,
 " With Hecate stern ; and the reluctant dead 205

" Pluck from their quiet graves ; my thrilling song
 " Can steal the spirit from its mortal frame,
 " While the deluded Fates, with careful toil,
 " Spin on the useless thread ; my charms displace
 " The rooted forest, and in rapid flight 210
 " Delay Jove's light'ning : rivers backward roll,
 " And at my bidding hasten to their source.
 " Think not my words are false : behold e'en now
 " I change thy household deities." She spoke :
 And suddenly the marble walls assumed 215
 Unusual radiance, and the ceilings shone
 With fretted gold. Attracted by the sight,
 He feasts his ardent eyes upon the scene,
 Rejoicing in his wealth. E'en so at first
 Mæonia's king, with swelling heart, elate, 220
 Perceived the wonders of his magic touch ;
 But when he saw the dainties of his board
 Harden apace, and the rich flowing wine
 Freeze into solid ore, he spurn'd the gold,
 And cursed his hand that wrought such fatal change. 225

Won by the act, Rufinus quick exclaims :

“ Be thou a mortal, or a god, thy will

“ Henceforward I obey.” Leaving his home,

Eastward he shapes his course, to where, afar,

The Cyanean isles, once moving shores, 230

Threaten the narrow seas—that streight renown’d

Of Bosphorus, where sail’d the Argonauts

On bold design ; whose stormy waters part

The tow’rs of Asia from the Thracian coast.

At length his toilsome journey is complete ; 235

And, guided by the Fates’ malignant care,

A royal dome he enters : here his heart

Conceives ambition, venal and corrupt.

His clients he deceives, betrays their trust,

And sells the smiles and honors of his prince ; 240

The injured he incites to deep revenge,

Inflames their wounds, and nourishes their hate.

E’en as the Ocean drinks each various stream

With sateless drought ; the flowing Ister cool,
 The sultry Nile ; and, all unsatisfied, 245
 Still thirsts for more ; so doth his avarice,
 Though fed with floods of gold, still gape for food.
 If of a splendid ornament possess'd
 Some one he haply sees, or turns his eye
 Where more luxuriant fields perfume the air ; 250
 Rufinus' stores the ravish'd jewel swells,
 And the rich land its lord's destruction dooms :
 Plenty becomes a curse ; straight from his home,
 His ancient fields, he drives the victim forth ;
 Plunders the living, and defrauds the heir. 255
 Uncounted stores, the rapine of a world,
 One house receives : the people are enslaved,
 And cities crouch to private tyranny.

What dost thou madly seek ? if to thy will
 Each Ocean yielded, and rich Lydia pour'd 260
 For thee her golden streams ; were thine the throne
 Of Cræsus, and gay Persia's diadem ;

Still would'st thou sigh, unsatisfied and poor.
 Desire makes needy men. Wisely content,
 Fabricius spurn'd the off'rings of a king ; 265
 Consuls have toil'd beside the weary plough,
 And narrow walls immortal heroes held.
 More rich to me such poverty ; more dear
 My lowly roof, than palaces like thine.
 Thee, lux'ry palls with oft untasted food : 270
 Freely to me the earth a banquet gives.
 What though thy fleeces steal the Tyrian die,
 And all thy broider'd vests are richly stain'd
 With regal purple : flowers to me are bright,
 And the gay meadows mock the pride of art. 275
 Let the resplendent couch, and gilded room,
 Invite thy rest : the fragrant herbage courts
 My careless limbs to more profound repose ;
 And while thy halls with early clamor ring ;
 The warbling songs of birds, and murm'ring brooks 280
 Awake my morning hours. Life needs not wealth :
 Nature to all around dispenses joy.

If they were known, would not the world retire
 To taste such pleasures? on th' embattled plain
 No trumpet then would bray; no hissing dart 285
 Empierce the air; no ship contend with storms,
 Nor ponderous engine strike the trembling walls.

Still doth that hateful avarice increase
 In fierce Rufinus; he fresh plunder seeks
 By violence, or shameless fraud; and still 290
 Conceals, with hollow courtesies and smiles,
 His ill intent: but if his purpose fail,
 No lion stricken by Getulian spears,
 No howling tigress plunder'd of her whelps,
 Nor wounded serpent, can exceed his rage, 295
 Or match the fury swelling in his heart:
 His oaths affront the majesty of heav'n:
 His victim falls not singly; to his wrath
 The slaughter'd children and the murder'd wife
 Supply too poor a sacrifice: they die 300
 Who kindred or acquaintance claim; nor then

His hatred rests ; e'en the unhappy land
 That nursed his foe, he to destruction dooms,
 And strives to sweep its memory from the earth.
 Nor swift the stroke of death ; tortures precede : 305
 Darkness, and bonds, and stripes delay the sword.
 His mercy wounds more keenly than the steel ;
 And life is spared to misery : death yields
 Too little for revenge. Secure in guilt,
 Himself is criminal and judge. He owns 310
 No virtue, vigilant in crimes ; no shores
 Are safe from his pursuit ; not Sirius fierce,
 Nor Winter, howling o'er Riphean rocks,
 Retards his eagerness : Meanwhile his heart
 Consumes with anguish, lest the slaughtering sword 315
 Should fail, or royal clemency awake.
 Nor innocence, nor trembling age, he spares :
 The son is slain before the father's face ;
 The aged sire condemn'd to banishment.
 What tongue can tell, what weeping eye deplore 320
 The fulness of their woe ! Compared to his,

Claud.

H

What were the deeds of those atrocious men
 Whose murd'rous acts fame shudders to relate ;
 Sinis, who bound his foes to bending trees,
 Sciron, or Phalaris, or Scylla fell ! 325
 O gentle steeds of Diomed ! O fanes
 Of merciful Busiris !—If compared
 To dread Rufinus, Spartacus appears
 A lenient robber, cruel Cinna, just.
 Wild terrors seize the victims of his hate, 330
 Inly they groan, nor dare attempt revenge.

But the high soul of Stilicho disdains
 All abject fear ; calm in the midst of strife,
 He lifts his sword, and dares the monster's ire :
 No magic car he needs, nor the swift wings 335
 Of Pegasus. Peace on his presence waits.
 A tow'r in storms, a shield against despair,
 In him the sad find refuge, and his arm
 Protects and conquers : Ruin checks her hand,
 And dangers fly before him. So the course 340

Of swoll'n and angry torrents, some huge rock
 Opposes, when the waters rage, and hurl,
 With deaf'ning roar, uprooted trees and stones,
 Along their furious waves.—O thou whose might
 Sustain'd a falling world, what praise may best 345
 Adorn thy name ? to us the Gods have made
 Thy presence welcome as the gentle star,
 Whose friendly ray the lonely seaman cheers,
 When his toss'd bark the pilot's guiding skill
 No more obeys. Perseus, as fame reports, 350
 With conquering arm the ocean-monster fought,
 And dyed the waters with its blood ; but he
 On soaring wings was safe, and doubly arm'd
 With Gorgon shield : thou neither pinions strong,
 Nor Medusean locks didst need in fight. 355
 Him love inspired : the Roman, welfare thee.
 Henceforth Antiquity no more shall boast
 Of wise or glorious acts ; thy deeds surpass
 Alcides' toil ; in one dark wood alone
 Nemæa's lion raged, and to one grove 360

The dreadful boar its ravages confined ;
 Antæus, thou beyond the Lybian shores
 Extendedst not thy sway ; Crete, only, heard
 The roaring bull, and Lerna's single lake
 The Hydra vex'd. But not one sea alone, 365
 Nor one wide shore this tyrant-monster ranged :
 All that beneath the Latian empire bow'd,
 From distant Ganges to th' Iberian shore,
 Dreaded his name : not Geryon, triple-form'd,
 Nor howling Cerberus could wake such fear ; 370
 Nor if one horrid shape, the Hydra's strength
 Could take, with Scylla's fierce rapacity,
 And wild Chimæra's fire. Arduous and long
 Th' unequal contest raged, when virtue warr'd
 With vice. Rufinus bares the sword ; thy arm 375
 Prevents its execution : he the rich
 Despoils ; thou givest to the poor : 'tis his
 To move destruction ; to restore is thine :
 He fights ; but thou art master of the field.

As some dire pestilence, encreasing fast 380
 Through all th' infected region of the air,
 First on the cattle feeds, and then devours
 Cities and nations, and with sultry blast
 Drops on th' infected rivers Stygian dew; ;
 So this insatiate spoiler not alone 385
 Destroys the people, but aspires to shake
 E'en thrones and sceptres, and would trample down
 Th' imperial dignity of sacred Rome.
 From Scythia's barren fields, and Ister's shore,
 He tempts each barb'rous race, of warlike mood, 390
 Betraying to the foe his native troops.
 The wild Sarmatian, and the mingled tribes
 Of Dacia come, and they who quaff their cups
 Distain'd with blood; the Alan bold who drinks
 Of cool Mæotis, with the Gelon fierce, 395
 Who paints his warrior limbs with dusky hues;
 A num'rous band: meanwhile with secret pow'r
 He aids their cause, and checks the arms of Rome.

For when thy conquering sword, to Getic hosts,

In full revenge for brave Promotus slain, 400
 Resistless, would have dealt the final blow,
 While yet their force was weak, the conquest sure :
 Then did Rufinus, traitor to his gods,
 And with that crew barbarian leagued, defer
 With subtle sleight the battle, feigning aid 405
 From other pow'rs ; though well he knew the Huns
 Were near at hand, and firm to join the foe.

Beyond Tanais' shore, in Scythia's clime
 Their country lies : the stedfast Northern star
 Sees not a race more dreadful ; rude their garb, 410
 Terrific in their mien ; their ardent minds
 Endure perpetual toil ; the dext'rous spear
 Supplies their sanguine feast, nor know they aught
 Of Ceres' art ; their faces they delight
 To scar with wounds, and deem it glorious 415
 To swear by murder'd sires. Join'd to their steeds,
 Like Centaur-forms they sit, rapid in flight,
 Impetuous in pursuit. Yet, fearless, thou,

O Stilicho, against that barb'rous tribe,
 Ledst on thy warriors to the Hebrus' shore ; 420
 While thus, ere shrilling trumpets roused the fight,
 Thy suppliant vows to fav'ring Mars were paid :

“ O God of battles, whether thou liest at ease
 “ On cloudy Hemus, or upon the brow
 “ Of frozen Rhodopé ; on Athos' hill, 425
 “ Wooed by the Persian's oar, or on the top
 “ Of high Pangæus, dark with waving woods ;
 “ Be with us, and protect the sons of Thrace :
 “ If ours the glory, thine shall be the spoil.”

He heard, and from his snowy rocks arose, 430
 And call'd his ministers : “ Bellona, swift,
 “ My plumed helm ; let Fear my car prepare,
 “ And Terror yoke the steeds. Urge, urge your haste.
 “ Me to the battle Stilicho invites,
 “ Most favor'd of my sons ; oft hath his hand 435
 “ Enrich'd my altars, and with hostile crests

" Adorn'd the oak. Together to the field
 " We rush, one clarion calls us on, and him
 " My car accompanies." He spoke, and leap'd
 Upon the tented plain : the flying foe 440
 Now Mars, now fearless Stilicho pursues,
 Alike in arms and form ; high waved their plumes,
 Their mail-clad limbs were bathed in sweat, and deep
 The satiated spear imbibed the gore.

Meanwhile Megæra, boastful in success, 445
 And with abundant slaughter gratified,
 Now sees Astræa in her lonely tow'r,
 Dejected and forlorn : her thus she taunts
 With ireful speech : " behold that peaceful age,
 " That golden period to thee so dear ! 450
 " Lo ! happiness once more returns, and we
 " Sad Furies, find no residence on earth.
 " Turn thy glad eyes to yonder ruin'd walls,
 " Bright with barbarian flames, and there behold
 " The work of desolation—woe and death. 455

- " That blood Rufinus on my altar pours ;
 " The livid corpses feed the Hydra's jaws.
 " Leave, leave mankind : their fate henceforth is mine.
 " Speed to the starry regions—to that sphere
 " Where the bright Zodiac glitters in the south ; 460
 " Near to the fiery lion take thy seat,
 " Where Libra yields a space. Would that my hate
 " With unrelenting rigor could pursue !

- The goddess calm returns : " Not long thy rage
 " Shall terrify the earth : thy fav'rite dies ; 465
 " The victor's sword hangs over him, and soon
 " His groaning ghost departs ; his hated corse
 " Shall find no grave. E'en now the age exults :
 " Great as his godlike sire Honorius comes.
 " He the wild Indian and the Mede subdues ; 470
 " Kings bow beneath his yoke ; the frozen stream
 " Of Phasis, by his courser's heel is spurn'd ;
 " And o'er Araxes proud his banners wave.
 " Thee from the daylight driv'n, in heaviest chains,

- “ Shorn of thy serpent locks, hell’s horrid depth, 475
 “ Expectant, craves. Then the glad earth to all
 “ Shall yield her stores ; the free luxuriant plain
 “ No boundary shall part, no ploughshare cleave ;
 “ Spontaneous harvests suddenly shall bless
 “ The reaper train ; and ev’ry oak distil 480
 “ The golden honey ; while the lakes and streams,
 “ Rich with the purple juice, and fragrant oil,
 “ O’erflow. No more let gilded pomp derive
 “ Resplendent robes, from fleeces stain’d by art ;
 “ In living hues, more bright the flocks shall glow, 485
 “ And sparkling gems bedeck the radiant shores.”

END OF BOOK I.

RUFINUS.



BOOK II.



Introduction.

ONCE more, O Muses, celebrate the groves
Of Helicon ! Amid their sacred haunts
Your train may freely rove. No hostile tramp
With shrill alarm, the softer melodies
Of joy disturbs ; Terror hath fled afar ;

And thou, Apollo, crownest with a wreath
 Thy great avenger. The polluted lips
 Of fierce barbarians now no more defile
 Castalia's fountain, and the hallow'd stream
 Where inspiration dwells. Alphæus bore 10
 The tide of slaughter down his lucid waves,
 And redden'd Sicily's triumphant seas,
 While distant Arethusa's azure stream,
 Distain'd with blood, the recent conquest knew.

Now let the toil and dangers of the field 15
 Be changed for grateful ease ; yield to the lyre
 Thy lofty mind, O Stilicho, nor scorn
 Awhile to listen to the gentle Muse :

Lo, oft victorious Mars, with battles tired,
Lays his unconquer'd limbs on Thracian snows, 20
In calmed mood, forgetful of his state,
And to Pierian songs inclines his ear.

RUFINUS.

Book II.

Now were the Alpine regions and the plains
Of rich Hesperia won ; removed above,
Th' imperial victor graced the starry heav'ns ;
And to thy care, O Stilicho, devolved
The pow'r of Rome, the guidance of the state,
With all the arms, and rival majesty
Of either court. And now Rufinus seeks
Once more to vex the world with horrid war ;
His heart endures not peace, nor can his hand
Refrain from blood ; thus to himself he grieves :— 10

Claud.

I

“ How shall I now protect my threaten’d life ?
 “ How stem the overwhelming flood ? alas !
 “ The snares of hatred compass me around,
 “ And circling foes eventful deeds prepare !
 “ How then escape ? no armed force is mine, 15
 “ No prince befriends my cause ; each hour matures
 “ My danger ; and the hov’ring sword of fate
 “ Now glitters o’er my head. What then remains
 “ But that some great destruction I contrive,
 “ And crush the guiltless nations in my fall ? 20
 “ My vengeful soul could taste delight in death,
 “ ’Mid gen’ral doom ; the ruin of the world
 “ Shall yield a solace in that bitter need.
 “ Till then endure, my fate ! and be my pow’r
 “ With life alone extinct.”—Resolved he speaks. 25
 And as swift Eolus unchains the winds
 To bluster through the air, so he lets loose
 The nations, and dissolves the bonds of peace.
 No region is secure, o’er all he pours
 The tide of slaughter. Some to battle rush 30

Upon the frozen Danube, and the car
 Of desolation urge, where late in peace
 The dashing oar was heard : from Caspian wastes,
 From chill Armenia, led through secret paths,
 Each savage tribe comes forth, in greedy hope 35
 To spoil the gorgeous empire of the East.
 The plains of Cappadocia, and the hill
 Of cold Argæus, to the din of war
 Resound : the Halyx reddens with the fight ;
 Nor can Cilicia's rocks defend her fields. 40
 Through the rich tract of Syria's beauteous shore
 Destruction stalks ; Orontes' flowery side,
 Used to the song of peaceful joy alone,
 And warbling choirs, the mail-clad courser spurns ;
 Asia is drown'd in tears ; Europe, a prey, 45
 To fierce barbarians ; from the Euxine sea,
 Far as the Adriatic's roaring gulf,
 The discord rages ; o'er the ravaged plains
 The shepherd flies, the unfed cattle droop ;
 The furrowed lands appear like Lybian wastes, 50

Which, parch'd by torrid and incessant suns,
 No human culture own. Bare are the fields
 Of fruitful Thessaly, and Pelion's hill
 No more is vocal to the rustic pipe.
 Devouring flames Emathia's verdure seize ; 55
 Pannonia becomes the spoiler's prey,
 And Thrace and Mysia fall : still none bewail
 The work of havoc, ev'ry heart becomes
 Inured to misery, by successive ills,
 Each heavier than the last. How soon decay 60
 May steal on grandeur ! that majestic state
 Gain'd by the sword of millions, and secured
 With many a nation's blood,—the glorious work
 Of heroes, the unrivall'd, lasting throne,—
 Which all the strength of Rome, the toil of years, 65
 Could scarcely raise, now in one short-lived hour,
 A traitor's weak and worthless hand o'erthrows.

That city too, which, emulous of Rome,
 Rears its proud spires o'er waste Chalcedon's sand,

Now trembles in dismay ; near and more near 70
 The watch fires burn, the trumpet's shrill alarms
 Sound at her gates, and flying spears invade
 Her walls. Within, the pale inhabitants
 Keep fearful guard ; some on the ramparts mount,
 Some climb the ships, and stretch around the port. 75
 Meanwhile Rufinus, in the city's woe
 Rejoicing, to a lofty turret hastes,
 And eager contemplates the hostile camp.
 He sees the daughters of the plain in bonds,
 The wounded villager cast forth to die, 80
 In pools and streams, or in his wilder'd flight
 Transfix'd, or slain beside his cottage door ;
 The aged perish, and with infant blood
 Maternal breasts are stain'd. These direful scenes
 With horrid joy dilate his heart, and move 85
 His lips to smile ; if one short pang he owns,
 'Tis that his hand partakes not of the act.
 On all around he sees the wasting fire,
 Insatiate, prey ; he revels in delight,

And hails the fell destroyer. Oft he boasts 90
 That him alone the hostile camp receives,
 To parley, or to council. Round him throngs
 A num'rous band of arm'd attendants, slaves;
 And dire associates. In the midst he rides,
 Clad in barbarian furs, with flowing reins ; 95
 The ponderous quiver, and resounding bow,
 And all his garb, reveal a hostile mind.
 He blushes not to change the robes of state
 For savage vests, while Roman courts deplore
 Their judge debased. What was the aspect then ?— 100
 The secret murmurs of the people ? none
 Dared openly to shed their tears ; no voice
 Complain'd aloud ; in private thus they mourn :
 “ How long must we this galling yoke sustain,
 “ These terrors bear ? When shall oppression cease ? 105
 “ What hand can now our miseries relieve,
 “ Or dry our tears ? On us barbarians rise,
 “ And, worse than they, Rufinus is our foe.
 “ No refuge, no escape ; the land, the sea,

" Are guarded ; Danger threatens us abroad ; 110
 " Horrors, and death, at home. O Stilicho,
 " Haste to thy falling country ! in these walls,
 " Sweet pledge of love, thy blooming daughter lives ;
 " Thy mansion too is here ; and these our skies
 " Witness'd thy nuptial bliss ; for thee too blazed 115
 " The torch of Hymen in the regal dome.—
 " O hasten to our aid ! e'en if alone
 " Thou com'st, thy presence will dismay our foes,
 " And curb this monster's rage."—Such were the storms
 That ravaged now the empire of the East. 120

But when the genial breath of Spring dissolved
 The colder year, and deck'd in fresh attire
 The frozen glebe, then, having left the states
 Of Italy secure in peace, his camp
 Removing, Stilicho advances swift 125
 To where the orient sun first lights the world ;
 Strength'ning his warlike force, with chosen troops
 From Gallia and the East. So vast an host,

So various, ne'er before appear'd beneath
 A waving banner. To the crowded field 130
 Th' Armenian comes, who loosely robes his limbs
 And crimps his braided hair ; and each fierce tribe
 Of Gaul, with fiery tresses ; from the banks
 Of Rhone they haste, from Arar's gliding stream,
 And rapid Rhine, whose foaming waters lave 135
 Their infant brood ; and from the full Garrone,
 Whose furious waves, the angry ocean meets,
 And drives them backward to their source. Each breast
 One feeling animates ; their recent wounds
 They scorn ; the vanquish'd with the victor joins 140
 To aid the general cause, and they, whom late
 Insatiate wrath, and civil discord fired,
 Now follow to the field one common lord.
 So moved in elder times that myriad host,
 Pour'd out from half the globe, by Xerxes proud 145
 In pageant splendor led ; the thirsting bands
 Exhausted in their route the mightiest streams,
 Shadow'd the light of day with arrowy show'rs,

And dug with giant toil through mountains wide,
 To steer their tall ships 'mid the wooded hills ; 150
 While o'er the bridged sea the army pass'd.

Scarcely had Stilicho advanced his force
 Beyond the Alps, ere the barbarian horde
 Call'd in their scatter'd troops, and trembling form'd
 A camp for gen'ral safety, fenced around 155
 With palisade and foss, and mimic walls,
 Of circling waggons built, and hides of bulls.

But in his distant tow'r Rufinus feels
 A secret horror ; long perplex'd he stands
 With pale and bloodless cheeks, doubtful if best 160
 To speed his guilty flight, or his dread foe
 In abject terms implore, or join the camp
 Barbarian.—What now avails his wealth,
 His heaps of shining ore, his spacious courts
 Resplendent, and his tow'rs that pierce the sky ?— 165
 With boding heart he waits his enemy,

Counts o'er the intervening space of time,
 Numbers each mile, and so computes the hours
 His fleeting life may last. He looks with dread
 On future peace. Repose is not for him ; 170
 Oft from his couch he starts with phrenzied soul,
 Oppress'd by guilty fear, the worst of woes.
 Yet to his wonted fierceness soon he turns,
 And arms his breast with vice ; th' imperial dome
 He gains, and to Arcadius thus prefers 175
 His pray'r with threat'ning mix'd : " By the bright crown
 " Thy brother wears, by each immortal act
 " Thy godlike sire achieved, lo I adjure
 " Thine aid, flow'r of thy race ! shield me from death :
 " Protect me from the wrath of Stilicho. 180
 " All Gallia wars against my life ; each shore
 " The ocean laves, the distant land that lies
 " Beyond Britannia's isle, if such there be,
 " Conspire to work my fall ; for this one deed,
 " Nations combine their strength ! ten thousand swords
 " Demand a single head ! Wherefore this rage ? 186

- " Lo to himself he arrogates the world,
 " Scorning a rival ; Italy he sways,
 " Rules over Lybia, and dictates laws
 " To Gallia, and to Spain : all that the sun 190
 " Beholds, all nature's comprehensive reign,
 " To his ambition, yield too poor a space.
 " The treasures which thy royal father piled
 " Within this palace, the profaner hand
 " Of Stilicho would ravage ; him alone 195
 " These wars enrich, and what his av'rice grasps,
 " His pow'r confirms his prize.—Behold how peace
 " Attends on him ; on us grim battles low'r.
 " Why should he seek thine empire ? bid him quit
 " Th' Illyrian borders, and disband his troops 200
 " Collected in the East ; bid him divide,
 " Between the brothers, the imperial force :
 " Not to the sceptre only wert thou heir,
 " The armies of this realm are thine. But if
 " Thou wilt permit this foe, or to my cause 205
 " Dost hesitate thine aid, by hell's dread pow'r,

" And by th' eternal stars above, I swear,
 " This life, alone, shall never glut the sword ;
 " Another's head shall fall ; the Stygian realms
 " Not unattended shall Rufinus seek ; 210
 " Nor shall the victor smile upon my grave."—
 He speaks and dictates to th' unwilling prince
 An order to prevent the chief's approach.

Meanwhile, exulting, Stilicho draws near
 The hostile trenches ; his heroic bands, 215
 He loudly cheers with bold and martial voice.
 The Gaul his right, th' Armenian forms his left ;
 And nearer now upon the plain are seen,
 Through clouds of dust, a thousand foaming steeds,
 And many a lifted lance, with artful forms 220
 Of purple snakes adorn'd, which, as the air
 More freshly blows, in living fierceness seem
 To sport upon the gale. The radiant arms
 Glance o'er the plains of Thessaly, illumine
 The cave of Chiron, and the woody banks 225

Where young Achilles play'd ; Cæta's dark groves
 The splendor pierces ; snowy Ossa hears
 The thunders of the field, whilst with deep roar
 Olympus answers to the din of war.
 Now, with high courage fired, each valiant breast 230
 Is prodigal of life. Mountains nor floods
 Had barrier'd their course ; their mast'ring swords,
 Resistless, would have cumber'd all the plain.

If to this ardor, then, the Fates had lent
 Fit opportunity, Greece had not seen, 235
 In after days, such slaughter on her shores ;
 The house of Pelops, the Arcadian tow'rs,
 And antient Lacedemon might have stood ;
 Nor had the sea reflected back the fires
 Of blazing Corinth, nor th' Athenian dames 240
 Wept o'er their servile state : a single day
 Had ended all our wars, and banish'd far
 Each cause of future misery. Alas !
 Invidious Fortune from our rising hopes

That glorious triumph stole ! —A band of horse, 245
 In rich caparison, with trumpet's blast,
 The royal mandate to the chief conveys.
 Amazed he listens ; grief and anger strive
 Within his breast, and wonder fills his mind,
 That one so base should have such pow'r to harm. 250
 Dubious to tempt the combat, or to quit
 His noble enterprize, he burns t' avenge
 Illyria's wrongs, yet fears to violate
 His sovereign's will ; one while his country's good,
 Anon the dread of faction sways his mind: 255
 At length his hands uplifting to the skies,
 Sternly the hero thus his thoughts express'd.

“ Ye unrelenting deities, whose wrath
 “ Not all the miseries of Rome can sate !
 “ If ye the ruin of this empire seek, 260
 “ Or, weary of the human race, devise
 “ Entire destruction to the groaning world ;
 “ Let the vast ocean heave, and drown the plains,

" Or with the fiery coursers of the sun,
 " Once more confound the globe ! Why should mankind
 " Derive inglorious ruin from Rufinus ? 266
 " The earth abhors so base an instrument.—
 " By strong necessity alone compell'd,
 " We sheathe our unstain'd swords. O lofty tow'rs,
 " Doom'd to devouring flames ; O ancient walls, 270
 " By desolation threaten'd, witness ye
 " My anguish ! yet I yield, and to its fate
 " This miserable land resign. Bow down
 " Your standards, leaders of the brave ! retire,
 " Ye warriors, to your homes ! no more give breath 275
 " To shrilling trumpets ! hide your useless spears !
 " Spare the contiguous enemy, for so
 " Rufinus wills ! "—This said, loud murmurs rise
 Among the troops, such as Ceraunia's rocks
 Send forth when stricken by the angry waves, 280
 Or like th' impetuous thunders that resound
 O'er watry Cora. They refuse to part,
 Impatient of their prey ; each tribe invokes

The gen'ral leader, and demands his aid.
 The soldier's love, their friendly mutiny, 285
 Much move the hero's breast. Thus they exclaim :

“ Who from our grasp shall wrest the shining blade,
 “ The pointed spear, or loose our bended bows ?
 “ Who to the glist'ning steel can give a law ?
 “ Courage once roused, no future effort quells. 290
 “ Already, thirsting for barbarian gore,
 “ Our arrows wing the air ; our vengeful hands,
 “ Unconscious, wield the sword ; our sheath disdains
 “ A bloodless weapon. Why must we endure
 “ These evils ? Shall our discord always prove 295
 “ Productive only to our foes ? behold,
 “ A civil war again is near. Alas !
 “ Divide not then these kindred eagles : we,
 “ A band conjunct, indissoluble, form.
 “ Where'er thou shapest thy way, we follow still ; 300
 “ To distant Thulé cursed by wintry skies,
 “ To Lybia's burning sands. Say, wilt thou seek

" The plains of India, or the red-sea shores,
 " Our lips with thine shall quaff the golden waves
 " Of rich Hydaspes : if the torrid south, 305
 " And Nile's remotest banks, delight thee more,
 " We also will forsake our native realms,
 " And deem that spot our country where the tents
 " Of Stilicho arise."—The hero thus :
 " Repress this violence, my friends, nor vent 310
 " These angry threats ; glory can never crown
 " The war which private injury would urge.
 " Ye brave and tried companions of my toil,
 " Farewell !"—Straight he departs, nor utters more.
 Indignant so the hungry lion stalks, 315
 Impatient of his foes, when, all in arms,
 The rustic train compels his sullen flight,
 With fire and sharpen'd steel; his lordly mane
 He droops, and shuts his glowing eyes, and seeks
 The woods with deep and melancholy roar. 320
 Dismiss'd the legions, through each rank prevails
 The cry of lamentation ; tears bedew

Their iron casques, their mailed bosoms heave
 Oppressive sighs. "Are we abandon'd then?"—
 They sternly ask,—"forbidden to pursue 325
 "Thy footsteps? Why dost thou disdain thy troops,
 "Oft crown'd by gay Bellona's victor hand?
 "Are we degenerate; or does the West
 "With happier fortune claim alone thy care?
 "What doth it now avail us to behold 330
 "Our gods, our families, our home restored?
 "Without thy presence all these blessings fail.
 "Already o'er our heads the tyrant's wrath
 "Impends; e'en now perhaps he spreads his snares,
 "And dooms us slaves to yon barbarian crew. 335
 "But not so tamely shall our valor yield:
 "Still will we grasp the sword. What though, the while,
 "Beneath the western sun thine hours are spent,
 "Thou art our leader still, and still shalt prove
 "Our faith, though distant far: Due to thy wrongs 340
 "A victim at the shrine of vengeance falls.

Reluctantly they quit th' Hemonian plain,
 And reach Thessalonica's neighb'ring walls,
 With sorrow deeply rooted in their hearts,
 Brooding in silence on their great revenge. 345
 They plot a time for acting of the deed,
 And fix the hour of fate ; nor is there found,
 Among their youthful bands, one heedless tongue
 To mar the glorious purpose. Future times
 Shall wonder that a vulgar crowd preserved 350
 So great an enterprize inviolate ;
 That through a long and toilsome march, no speech,
 No casual word betray'd to stranger ears
 Their high intent. E'en cautious o'er their cups,
 Mute secresy prevails through all the host, 355
 And keeps the mystery from public note.—
 They pass the Hebrus, and the rocky bounds
 Of savage Thrace, until at length they reach
 The antient city by Alcides named.

Nor from Rufinus did report conceal 360
 The chief's departure, and the troops' approach :
 Greatly he triumphs, deems himself secure,
 And burns to grasp the sceptre ; thus his voice
 Excites the bold companions of his guilt :
 " We conquer, and expel the foe ; full soon 365
 " This wealthy empire shall become our prey :
 " No enemy we need to dread ; for if
 " All unprotected he assail'd us not,
 " Will he presume to tempt the battle now,
 " When friendly aid is near ? What man e'er struck 370
 " The warrior arm'd, whom naked he did shun ?
 " Go now, O Stilicho, and idly muse
 " Upon my ruin, in far distant climes.
 " Wide regions part us, and the roaring sea ;
 " Nor shalt thou pass again the Alpine heights 375
 " While life and pow'r are mine. Bid thy swift darts
 " Imbibe my blood, or seek a lengthen'd sword
 " To strike from Italy against our walls !
 " Do ancient records move thee not, or tales

" Of modern times ? audacity like thine 380
 " Who can display, or boast of his escape
 " From our encircling grasp ? one half the globe
 " We have proscribed thee ; and to us thy troops
 " Now render service. Spread the festive board,
 " My brave companions, bring your sumptuous gifts, 385
 " And let your gold allure our new allies.
 " To-morrow's-dawn will smile upon my vows,
 " Arcadius himself shall grant my suit,
 " And though reluctant share with me his throne.
 " Thus shall I proudly spurn the subject's life, 390
 " Nor yet incur the tyrant's hated name."

Loudly the servile train applaud his words ;
 For they had feasted on the public spoil,
 And kindred crimes in strictest bond had tied
 Rufinus' fate with theirs. Eager and glad, 395
 Already in their evil thoughts they sate
 Each lawless passion, and for plunder ripe
 Count o'er the towns and cities of the realm.

Now o'er the wearied world dim night began
 To spread her dusky veil; and gentle sleep 400
 His shadowy pinions waved o'er mortal heads :
 Rufinus soon the needed influence courts,
 His sickly brain long press'd with toilsome care ;
 But scarcely had he sunk to slumber, ere
 Around the couch, his sleeping fancy sees 405
 Dire shapes and phantoms glide, the restless ghosts
 Of them his sword destroy'd ; among their troop
 One loftier than the rest appear'd to move.
 His pallid lips : " Rise from thine anxious bed,
 " Why dost thou meditate on idle fears ? 410
 " Arise ! the coming day to thee shall bring
 " Long wish'd-for eminence, and end thy toils.
 " Thou shalt become exalted ; joyous crowds
 " Attend to bear thee in triumphant state !"
 So spake the vision in ambiguous terms ; 415
 Whilst in the guileful oracle, deceived,
 Th' unconscious victim read not his own fall.

And now the morning star on Hæmus' hill
 His welcome radiance threw ; and Titan urged,
 To utmost speed, his swift and burning wheels, 420
 Impatient to behold Rufinus dead.
 Straight from his lofty couch the tyrant springs,
 And orders that his splendid courts be deck'd
 With regal pomp, and feast ; and bids them stamp
 His name upon the servile gold, to show'r 425
 Among the multitude. In kingly pride,
 And haughtier than his prince, he issues forth
 To welcome back the armies : studied grace,
 Luxurious dignity, his air displays ;
 As if the purple had already clothed 430
 His undeserving form, and burning gems
 Diffused their piercing lustre o'er his brow.

South of the city lies a plain : the sea
 Each other side encircles. Bright in arms,
 And for revenge prepared, the legions here 435
 Display their ranks. The solid infantry,

The left ; the rapid horse possess'd the right,
 High mettled, champing on the bit. Gay plumes
 Disport upon the breeze, and steel-clad limbs
 Reflect each brilliant hue ; the flexile joints 440
 So skilfully the workman framed, that life
 Appear'd to animate each moving plate ;
 One would have thought that polish'd statues, dug
 From beds of solid ore, had fiercely breathed,
 And started into action : as the men, 445
 So were the steeds apparell'd ; iron capp'd,
 And ribb'd with mail. Their steady discipline
 The gazing crowd admire, in wonder mix'd
 With fear ; while as the wanton gale grew calm,
 The waving serpents droop'd upon the spears. 450

Arcadius first the sacred standard greets ;
 Rufinus follows, and in flatt'ring terms,
 Attempts his wonted guile ; their patriot zeal
 He praises, calls each soldier by his name,
 And welcomes their return with joyful news 455

Of parents, and of children safe. Meanwhile,
 As some were list'ning to his fraudulent tongue,
 The wheeling flanks extend in circling lines ;
 Anon the field they compass, less'ning still
 The narrow circuit, till with bucklers join'd, 460
 They hem their victim in. So in green woods
 The hunter spreads his mazy toils around :
 So to the reedy shore the fisher hauls
 His timid, wond'ring prey, contracts his net,
 And snares his helpless captive. He, with hope 465
 Elate and ardent, sees not what the troops
 Intend : he grasps Arcadius' robe, condemns
 His long delay : he burns to mount the throne,
 And share the sceptre.—Suddenly the clash
 Of swords is heard, and thus a thund'ring voice 470
 Resounds : “ On us, thou worst of slaves, on us
 “ Wilt thou impose this bondage ? know'st thou not
 “ Our deeds, our fame ? shall we, who far and wide
 “ Freedom and laws dispensed, now brook thy chains ?

“ Twice have we pass’d the Alps, victorious twice 475
 “ O’er civil discord ; war hath taught us too
 “ To crush a base usurper’s tyranny.”

Dread and amazement strike the traitor dumb :
 No refuge, no escape : on ev’ry side
 A grove of glitt’ring spears : astonish’d, pale, 480
 He trembles at the circling blaze of steel.
 So the wild tenant of the forest shade,
 Within th’ arena brought, distracted stands ;
 The daring combatant provokes his ire,
 With jav’lin firmly fix’d, and bended knee, 485
 But, anxious and appall’d, the monster eyes
 The lofty theatre’s extended rows,
 And wonders at the tumult loud and strange.

Impetuous from the ranks a warrior breaks,
 With lifted blade, in speech and aspect stern— 490
 “ Though by thine artifice repulsed, ’tis he,
 “ ’Tis Stilicho who now inflicts this blow :

" Absent, he finds a sword to pierce thy heart."
 He speaks, and plunges in Rufinus' breast
 His gleaming falchion. Glory crowns the act 495
 That frees a weary world. Soon in his corse
 Each thirsting spear is fix'd, they rend his limbs ;
 A thousand jav'lins drink his guilty blood,
 Scorning to keep their brightness undistain'd.
 They mar his visage, and pluck out his eyes, 500
 Yet beaming life, and mangle all his shape ;
 His feet they lop, and from the well-knit joints
 The nervous shoulders part ; his broken spine,
 His bleeding heart, and panting entrails, torn,
 Declare the hatred that attends his name : 505
 Too poor a sacrifice their vengeance finds,
 Though all the field is sprinkled with his gore.
 So erst Aonia's hill was dyed with blood,
 When Bacchus' frantic rout in fury seized
 The Theban king who scorn'd their mystic rites, 510
 Or when, by stern Latona's ire transform'd,
 Actæon fled before th' unconscious pack.

O Fortune, when with such unlook'd for change,
 Thou visitest the wretch, unjustly bless'd,
 Say dost thou deem thy folly is excused ? 515
 How shall one life atone for thousands slain ?
 Divide his corse between the injured states,
 Let Thrace possess his head, the Greeks his trunk ;
 Yet are his limbs too few for all the rest.

Now from the empty walls the people throng ; 520
 In glad security, the aged sires,
 The timid maids and joyful widows haste,
 And matrons, childless by Rufinus' sword ;
 O'er his remains they triumph, and in scorn
 Deep with the crimson hue of slaughter tinge 525
 Their trampling feet. His proud ambitious head,
 Uplifted on a spear, with fitting pomp
 They to the city bear, while showers of stones
 Assail its ghastly aspect ; and in sport
 His sever'd hand is made to sue for gold, 530
 From door to door, and grasp the glittering coin,

In imitative life, with sinews stretch'd,
To mark the avarice that possess'd his soul.

Let none henceforth in prosperous guilt confide,
And think his gods secure. That courtly hand 535
Which sought the regal sceptre, by the lips
Of suppliant nobles press'd, torn from its corse,
Unburied, seeks the vulgar charity !
Let him behold this sight whom Fortune's gale
Exalts too high : he who so lately rear'd 540
The lofty pyramid, and splendid walls,
Gorgeous as temples, to adorn his tomb,
A mangled form is trampled on the earth !
The famish'd vulture feeds upon those limbs
Which claim'd the Tyrian purple ! worlds he grasp'd, 545
Who finds not now the refuge of a grave !

The skies rejoice, the weary earth no more
Beneath her burden groans ; and all the stars
Fresh radiance pour as hell receives his shade :

Pale horror seizes on the sire of night, 550
 And howling Cerberus, while round him throngs
 Each wrathful ghost his former crimes oppress'd,
 And drags him to the unrelenting judge.
 So when some swain attempts the golden hive,
 The clustering natives, on the plunderer's head, 555
 Settle in angry swarms, and dart their stings,
 And thickly load the air with hovering bands,
 To guard their honey and their waxen cells.

There lies a spot where deep Cocytus joins
 The flood of Acheron, a mingled lake 560
 Of fire and penal tears. Beside the bank
 A lofty tower is placed, whose brazen walls
 The flaming torrent washes on the right,
 While sad Cocytus' melancholy waves
 Border the left. Here when their life is spent, 565
 The mortal race assembles ; every trace
 Of former pride, of earthly grandeur fades,
 And spoil'd of all his gaudy pageantry,

The humble monarch by the beggar stands.
 There high enthroned, in judgment Minos sits : 570
 Such as refuse his sway he straight consigns
 To sterner Rhadamanth, whose piercing eye
 Discerns each human act : fit punishment
 To vice he deals, and makes her votaries take
 Th' inglorious form of beasts. Such as in blood 575
 Delighted, now assume the shape of bears ;
 The robber howls a wolf ; the crafty fox
 Denotes the sons of fraud ; they who were drown'd
 In wine and luxury, and they who quench'd
 Their noble reason with intemperate lust 580
 Herd with the grovelling swine ; while such as turn'd
 From honor, and betray'd with babbling tongue
 Confided secresy, are doom'd to glide
 With finny oars among the lakes of hell,
 Perpetually mute. Degraded thus, 585
 The guilty suffer, thrice ten hundred years ;
 Till purged in Lethe's dark oblivious stream,
 Once more they are attired in human shape.

So dealing various woe, the wrathful judge
 At length beholds Rufinus in the gloom : 590
 To indignation moved, his kindling eyes
 Dart angry glances on the trembling shade,
 While his deep voice appals the vast profound.

“ Approach, unhallow’d wretch, vile slave to gold,
 “ Destroyer of thy country’s laws ! By thee 595
 “ The torch of civil discord was inflamed ;
 “ Thy slaughtering hand hath choak’d the lakes of hell,
 “ And wearied with abundant toil the oars
 “ Of Charon. Hope not to disguise thy crimes ;
 “ Behold thy bosom mark’d with sable spots, 600
 “ Developing thy nature ! Anguish dire,
 “ And sad variety of pain are thine ;
 “ Over thy trembling head a rock shall hang
 “ And threaten momentary fate ; the wheel
 “ Shall lend its torture ; cooling rivers flow 605
 “ Before thy sight, yet shun thy burning lip ;
 “ The vulture, too, which rends the giant’s side,

“ Shall migrate from its food with frequent wing,
 “ To tear thy baser heart. All these whom thus
 “ Afflictions chasten, yield to thee in guilt ; 610
 “ More daring than Salmoneus, more false
 “ Than Tantalus, and lawless in thy lust
 “ As fierce Tityus : even if their vice
 “ Were all concentrate in a single breast
 “ Thine would exceed its sum. What punishment 615
 “ Can match the whole, when half thy deeds demand
 “ More than our utmost vengeance can inflict ?
 “ Hence with thy hideous aspect ! wound no more
 “ Our troubled sight !—Ye furies urge him swift,
 “ With scorpion lash, beyond th’ abodes of night, 620
 “ Beyond the realms of Erebus, and hurl
 “ His hated being to th’ abyss profound,
 “ Below the Titan’s gloom ; far, far beneath
 “ The depths of Hell and Chaos. There in pangs,
 “ His groaning spirit shall exist, as long 625

“ As glittering stars irradiate the pole,

“ And summer breezes sweep the rocky shores.”

END OF RUFINUS.

THE PHŒNIX.

BEYOND where India's scented gales arise,
A blooming grove on ocean's bosom lies,
A favor'd spot, where first Apollo pours
His dewy lustre from Aurora's bow'rs,
When, starting from the gates of morn, each steed, 5
Before light's car, flames on with breathless speed,
While swift on starry wheels, and pale with fear,
Night urges on afar her lone career.

The happy Phoenix in this blest retreat
Builds his unrivall'd, solitary seat, 10

And dwells secluded in the beauteous clime,
 Secure from injuries of chance or time ;
 Like some bright deity, o'er hill and vale,
 He fans with painted wings the odorous gale,
 While circling ages in their course admire, 15
 Fix'd as the sphères, his youth's unfading fire.
 His rich repast, nor fruits nor flowers compose,
 To quench his thirst, no crystal fountain flows ;
 More pure he feeds on day's ethereal beams,
 And drinks the cool gale from the azure streams. 20
 His eyes the radiance of the sun betray,
 And glowing splendors round his visage play ;
 High on his front, a crest of meteor light
 Breaks with calm lustre through the shades of night ;
 His legs confess the Tyrian's venom-die, 25
 The Zephyrs' speed his swifter wings outvie ;
 Spangled with gold, and dipp'd in hues more fair
 Than Iris paints upon the humid air.

Miraculously sprung, no common birth
 Produced this wonder to the grateful earth ; 30
 Himself both sire and offspring, dying, lives,
 And death to him still new existence gives ;
 For when a thousand summers' scorching powers
 The plains have borne, a thousand winters' showers,
 As oft when dewy Spring has clothed the glade, 35
 And swains as oft reposed in Autumn's shade,
 Subdued at length he owns Time's heavier tread,
 Bow'd with the weight of ages on his head.
 So on some mountain's top the lofty pine,
 With years and tempests worn, in slow decline 40
 Droops to the chilling rains, the stormy gales,
 While wasting age its trembling boughs assails.

Now see, by slow degrees, his bloom decays,
 Life's languid stream through frozen channels strays ;
 So veil'd in clouds, and fading on the sight, 45
 Pale Dian oft withdraws her silver light ;

Those soaring wings which cleaved the azure skies,
Now weakly fluttering, scarce from earth can rise.

Conscious of age, and studious to restore
His sinking frame to youthful grace once more, 50
He culls each arid flower of rich perfume,
And, weaving with Sabæan plants his tomb,
Ascends the odorous pile ; then in sweet lay,
Pour'd feebly forth, invokes the god of day,
With lowly pray'rs, to dart his fiercest fire, 55
And life, and youth at once to re-inspire.
Him when Apollo from on high beholds,
His course he stays, and thus his will unfolds :
“ O thou, whose tomb prepared, and feigned grave,
“ Exulting youth, and days more joyous crave, 60
“ Whom still from death I snatch, too fair a prey,
“ Whose being finds renewal in decay,
“ Resume thy wonted beauty ; I restore
“ Thy state, superior in its change !”—Nor more :

From his bright hair, the god a beaming tress 65
 Of waving gold bestows, of power to bless
 With life and vital heat ; the altar straight
 Consumes with fragrant fires ; welcomes his fate
 The royal bird, wrapp'd in the eager flame
 Whose ardent force soon wastes his aged frame. 70

Meanwhile the frightened Moon her course controls,
 And on their tardy axle sleep the poles ;
 All Nature labors with the pregnant pyre,
 Fearing to see th' eternal bird expire ;
 The faithful flames around the altar curl'd, 75
 Haste to restore the glory of the world ;
 Soon through each part a fiery ardor glows,
 The veins once more a boiling tide o'erflows ;
 Warm life again the deathless shape illumines,
 And the rude embers change to brilliant plumes ; 80
 True image of his sire, on wings of flame
 Starts to fresh life the son, in form the same :

Him so the next succeeds—the fiery tide
 Devours alone the barriers which divide
 One life exhausted, from an endless spring. 85

Rejoicing now he hastes on duteous wing,
 To offer to the Nile, and god of day,
 The reliques of his ancient sire's decay ;
 Swiftly he speeds his flight to Egypt's tow'rs,
 With fun'ral gift enwrapp'd in leaves and flow'rs. 90
 Innumerable birds his train supply,
 And round their king thick airy squadrons fly ;
 No straying pinions from their duty bend,
 Though thousands on his fragrant course attend.
 Awed to mute reverence the famish'd kite, 95
 And Jove's own eagles tempt no more the fight.

So leads some Parthian lord, by Tigris' side,
 In long array, a mix'd barbarian tribe ;
 Glowing in rich attire, the diamond's blaze
 With regal ornament the chief betrays ; 100

With golden rein, on steed of arching crest,
 In purple robes and crimson broider'd vest,
 Proudly he rides amid his vassal band,
 Supreme in pomp, and kingly in command.

Onward in state to royal Thebes he flies, - 105
 Through Egypt, famed for grateful sacrifice,
 Then to the glorious temple speeds apace,
 Whose sculptured walls an hundred columns grace ;
 There, as fame tells, each rite accustom'd paid,
 The kindred ashes of the bird are laid, 110
 While, grateful, he his patron-god adores,
 Prefers his hallow'd gift, and fire implores :
 The rising flames the scented roof illume,
 And the rich altars breathe divine perfume ;
 Far o'er the distant lakes the Zephyrs fling 115
 Arabian odors from their dewy wing,
 And fragrant airs, more fresh than vernal rose,
 Steal on the shores where Nile majestic flows.

O truly happy, to thyself sole heir,
 Death gives thee strength, who bids all else despair ; 120
 Kindly renews thy youth's decaying flow'r,
 And bids the grave thy years alone devour.
 Time's annall'd rolls, of many an age o'erflown,
 Eventful chronicles, to thee are known.
 Thou saw'st what time, usurping new domains, 125
 The rushing seas o'erwhelm'd the fertile plains ;
 And mark'd by thee was that destructive day,
 When Phæton's corse on earth disfigured lay.
 No slaught'ring hand thou fear'st, surviving sole,
 Though havoc stretches wide from pole to pole. 130
 Safe from the ruthless sisters' stern decree,
 In vain the Fates exert their pow'r on thee.

THE PORCUPINE.



OFt had I heard, and unbelieving still,
Stymphale, of thy wond'rous birds who fill
The air with arrows in their angry flight,
From iron pinions shot; but since my sight
Has rested on the porcupine, no more 5
I nurse the doubts that I indulged before.
His lengthen'd snout claims kindred with the swine,
His eager eyes with flames resplendent shine;
His horned front deceitful crops reveals,
And dog-like limbs his bristly coat conceals. 10

Nor yet is this unsightly monster left,
 By careful Nature, of defence bereft :
 O'er his whole form, when war demands, he rears
 A wond'rous harvest of destructive spears,
 Adorn'd with ebon spots, and varied light, 15
 And finely wrought in secret for the fight.

Nor like the tamer hedge-hog are these arms
 Immoveable ; when threaten'd war alarms,
 In dark'ning showers he scatters them around ;
 Now like the Parthian see him fly and wound, 20
 Hurling his self-form'd missiles in the air ;
 Behold him now more artful war declare ;
 Like troops well disciplined, his grove of spears
 He clashes, and each kindred shaft uprears ;
 His frame with military ardor shakes, 25
 A rustling sound his native armour makes ;
 As hostile bands, who hear the trumpet's blast,
 Their rattling spears against each other cast ;

Such rage within so small a compass lies.
 Nor is this animal more strong than wise ; 30
 In action calm, nor lavish of his store,
 Content to threaten, he attempts no more,
 Till life requires defence ; from error free,
 His dext'rous aim is sure ; neither does he
 On distant objects waste his subtle darts, 35
 But prudently delays his native arts,
 Nor plans attack till certain of success.

To power like this let human skill confess
 Itself inferior ! See th' Arcadian horn
 From slaughter'd goats with eager fury torn, 40
 And bent with fire ; to stretch the nervous cord,
 The stately bull his entrails must afford ;
 The shaft a reed supplies, tipp'd with bright steel
 And wing'd with feathers ; thus do we reveal
 By slow degrees what he from nature draws, 45
 Careless of foreign aid ; in him the laws,

The arts of warfare are at once combined,
 In him the quiver, shaft, and bow we find.

If from example all our knowledge springs,
 If watchful industry perfection brings, 50
 Whoe'er first bade their arrows fly afar,
 And distant enemies engage in war,
 The valiant Cretan with unfailing bow,
 The Parthian dreadful to th' unwary foe,
 Own'd one instructor for their wily arts, 55
 The beast whom Nature thus has cased in darts

THE TORPEDO.

WHO hath not heard the dire Torpedo's fame,
The strength, the power, denoted in its name ?
What though its form is tender, and its pace
Scarce leaves upon the sands a languid trace,
With subtle poison Nature arms its sides ;
Throughout its frame a freezing influence glides,
Which binds all life and heat in icy chains,
And native winters dwell within its veins.

To Nature, too, deceitful arts it owes ;
The wond'rous gift, by her conferr'd it knows ;

On that relying, now it calmly lies
 Mid sea-weeds on the shore ; now see it rise,
 Rejoicing in success, and foully feed
 On living forms, unpunish'd for the deed.

Perchance with careless and voracious haste, 15
 The clothed hook is in its jaws embraced ;
 Straight it perceives the snare, nor seeks to fly,
 Nor succour from its sharpen'd teeth to try ;
 Upon its foe by slow degrees it creeps,
 And, though a captive, conscious freedom keeps ; 20
 Its poison'd influence through the water steals,
 Hangs on the pendent line, and soon reveals
 E'en to the distant fisherman its source ;
 The floating tackle feels its deadly force,
 The reeded knots dissolve ; the daring hand, 25
 Benumb'd and chill, renounces its command.

Weary and sad the fisherman resigns
 At once his fractious captive, and his lines.

ON THE STATUES
OF THE
PIOUS BROTHERS AT CATINA.

SEE how the brothers with undaunted air,
Their venerable burthens, panting, bear !
Eternal honors crown their deathless names,
For whom in reverence ceased the eager flames,
While Ætna bade his fiery streams recoil, 5
Amazed to see the brethren's pious toil.

Upon their willing shoulders, as in state,
They place their parents, then, prepared for fate,
With quicken'd steps urge on their daring way,
Strew'd with fresh dangers through their fond delay. 10

Claud.

M

See how the sire points to the crimson'd skies ;
 The feeble mother utters mournful cries !
 Actual their terrors, nor can life surpass
 The anguish mingled in the wond'ring brass.
 The aspect of the youthful pair involves 15
 A secret horror, mix'd with high resolves ;
 Themselves they know not fear, 'tis but for those
 They succour, that they tremble to oppose
 The flames ; their robes play with the wind ; and he
 Who bears his father, leaves his right hand free : 20
 More cautious he who clasps the weaker frame,
 A mother's fears his utmost firmness claim.

Behold how exquisite the artist's skill !
 Alike the brothers in their form, but still
 Their features differ ; in the one we trace 25
 His sire, the other boasts his mother's grace :
 The sculptor's art has blended various years,
 A parent in each blooming son appears :

O'er each fair Piety exerts her claim,
And proves, at once, their birth, their love the same. 30

O pride of Nature ! monuments of truth !
By Age revered, and deified by Youth !
Not by vain-glory, not by gold allured,
To save your hoary parents ye endured
The furious flames. Such virtue well might move 35
Enceladus his torrents to reprove.
E'en Mulciber himself, as if in fear
Such bright examples might not tarry here,
Restrain'd abundant Ætna, lest his course
Should overwhelm them in its undiscerning force ; 40
The earth assisted in their pious load,
And breathing zephyrs cool'd the fiery road.

But if love raised the twin-born stars to heav'n,
If Fame ennobles him to whom 'twas given
To snatch from Phrygian flames his aged sire, 45
If glory gives to her immortal lyre

The sons who, duteous, dragg'd their mother's car,
 Shall she not sound in loudest strains afar,
 Divine Amphinomus, thy spotless name,
 And thine, O Anapus, as dear to fame ? 50
 Each temple through Sicilia's isle shall bear
 The glorious record of an act so fair,
 Sicilia famed for many a virtuous deed
 Shall still assign to this the noblest meed.
 Nor let us then the loss of treasured store, 55
 Or towers and glittering palaces deplore ;
 The desolating flames that proudly rose
 O'er structured art, were destined to disclose
 The godlike virtues of the noble pair,
 And glory sprung from ruin and despair ! 60

THE
OLD MAN OF VERONA.

How blest is he whose life's unvaried scene,
On one paternal spot has pass'd serene !
The roof that shelter'd him in early years,
A sacred refuge for his age appears ;
While with his staff beside his peaceful door, 5
He prints the sand whereon he crept before.

Him fortune curses not with various life,
Free from the merchant's toil, the soldier's strife ;
Heedless of busy Rumor's mad reports,
Far from the tedious din of wrangling courts, 10

Delighting in the pure and boundless skies
 He views the neighb'ring town with careless eyes.
 Not by new consulships he marks the year,
 But by the purple grape, the golden ear ;
 The spring by balmy gales, and opening flowers, 15
 The autumn by rich fruits, and changing bowers.
 To him the sun metes out the quiet day,
 With custom'd track, along th' etherial way ;
 The giant oak which shades the vale below,
 He saw an acorn on its parent bough ; 20
 Beneath th' encreasing shadow of the grove,
 Coeval with himself, he loves to rove.
 By him unvisited, Verona's towers
 Are far remote as India's palmy bowers ;
 And rough Benacus' angry waters roar, 25
 Unheeded as the waves on Egypt's shore.

Full many a year hath silver'd o'er his brow,
 And yet his limbs their youthly vigor show.

Let the vain traveller roam the world around,
And penetrate to earth's extremest bound, 30
The varied scenes but transient pleasure give,
Who learns to contemplate has learn'd to live.

PREFACE TO THE POEM

ON THE SIXTH

CONSULSHIP OF HONORIUS.



IN the calm hour of visionary night,
How apt each image of the wakeful sense
Throngs to the busy brain. The huntsman dreams
Of circling nets, and woods well-stored with game ;
The judge, of causes ; and the charioteer, 5
With needless apprehension, strives to pass
Th' unreal goal, and speeds his shadowy car ;
The lover's fancy dwells on secrecy
And stolen bliss ; the joyful merchant steers
Some richly freighted bark o'er tranquil waves, 10

Whilst the pale miser, on his wakeful couch,
 Grasps at his fleeting gold : the fever'd wretch
 From fountains cool and pure, attempts to lave
 His burning lip with ineffectual streams.

Me too, the Muse, when night upon the world, 15
 In silence deep, her mighty shadow spreads,
 Solicits to accustom'd thoughts ; for then
 In airy flight I seem to pierce the sky,
 So thick beset with stars, and at the feet
 Of heav'n's eternal sire, enwrapp'd in bliss 20
 Rehearse immortal lays, and, as the dream
 My fancy fires, the deities applaud,
 And list'ning spirits crown the golden lyre.
 The fate of stern Enceladus I sung,
 And huge Typhœus ; one, Vesuvius chains 25
 Beneath its solid pressure, Ætna's hill
 Confines the other in dark burning caves.
 How joyous were the skies when Jove return'd,
 Victorious from the fight, bearing the spoils

Of each Phlegræan foe.—This sacred dream 30
 Came not from that false ivory portal, whence
 Unreal visions issue ; truth springs forth
 From airy fiction, for behold I sing
 To him who on earth's high Olympus sits,
 And to this chosen train, likest to gods : 35
 Nor can sleep picture to my absent mind
 A fairer scene, than these abodes of state,
 Equal in splendor to the courts above.

FINIS.

NOTES.

THE
RAPE OF PROSERPINE.

BOOK I.

Page 4, line 15.

Of Athens' sacred temple, or Eleusis.

The temple of Ceres at Eleusis was famous for solemn and mysterious festivals, in commemoration of the grief of Ceres for the loss of her daughter.

Ibid. line 16.

—————*The dragon yoke*

Alludes to the winged steeds of Triptolemus, who was probably represented in the celebration of the Eleusinian mysteries.

Ibid. line 24.

Immortals, to whose wealth unlimited.

The poet in this place, as well as in many others, seems to favor the Heraclitic philosophy, which asserts that nothing in Nature perishes entirely, and that death is only a temporary reduction of corporeal being to a more immaterial state,—this doctrine is more fully explained in the speech of Lachesis, p. 6, l. 65:—*O god of night, &c.*

Page 16, line 249.

————— *where low, mournful, melodies.*

It has been fabled by the ancient poets that a kind of melodious utterance belonged to the Pine-tree. So Theocritus in his first Idyll.

Ἄδύ τι τὸ ψιθύρισμα, καὶ ἃ πίτυς, αἰπόλε, τήνα

* Ἄ ποτὶ ταῖς παγαῖσι μελίσσεται.

Goatherd, how sweetly on the list'ning ear,
Steals the soft music of the murm'ring pine,

From yonder fountain cool!————

The following origin is given to this circumstance:—
Pithys was a nymph beloved by Boreas and Pan, but preferring the latter, she was dashed against a rock by Boreas and killed. Upon the spot, marked by the sad incident, the Pine was first produced, which became the favorite tree of Pan, who loved to crown it with flowers, and to repose under its shade; but as often as the breath of Boreas visited its leaves, the tree was heard to utter its complaint in melodious and expressive murmurings.

Page 21, line 342.

—————so ivory glows,

When Lydian artists tinge its pearly hues

With rich Sidonian dyes.

Gesner terms this an Homeric beauty, which the Roman poets were studious to emulate. Vide Homer, *Il. v. l. 141*. Virgil, in his *Æneid*, *xii. 67*. has most beautifully

employed the same image. Dryden also has copied it in his Indian Emperor.

BOOK II.

Page 35, line 73.

Cyan rose eminent o'er all the train.

Cyan was the principal attendant on Proserpine. Her fate is fully described in Ovid v. 412.

Ibid. line 83.

Now Enna, parent of sweet flowers.

Cicero, after dwelling upon the popular belief of the Sicilians, respecting the sacredness of their island, as the former abode of Proserpine, and the residence of Ceres, thus describes the situation of the vale of Enna. “ Enna autem, ubi ea, quæ dico, gesta esse memorantur, est loco præcelso, atque edito, quo in summo est æquata agri planities, et aquæ perennes; tota verò omni aditu circumcisa,

atque diremta est, quam circa lacus, lucique sunt plurimi, et lectissimi flores omni tempore anni: locus ut ipse raptum illum virginis, quem jam à pueris accepimus, declarare videatur.”

The plain of Enna, renowned for these memorable events, is a spot of peculiar and unrivalled beauty, its fields, smoother and more verdant than the finest lawns, are watered by crystal streams perpetually murmuring through the shades. Entirely secluded, it is partly bordered by a spacious lake, and protected by the shelter of numerous groves; choicest flowers, in never-failing abundance, throughout the whole year, are found within its delightful limits: it seems, indeed, as if the very place itself spoke aloud in witness of those tales, which from our infancy we have been instructed to receive, while in each whispering breeze we fancy, the voice of the goddess, inquiring and lamenting for her daughter. Cic. in Verr. 4. 48.

Page 39, line 147.

And pluck'd her far'rite grief-inwoven flow'r.

Claud.

N

This favorite flower of Venus is the Anemone, which is fabled to have sprung from the earth, stained with the blood of Adonis. Vide Ovid. Met. 10. 723.

Page 50. line 367.

Within the bounds that Nature hath prescribed.

It was supposed that the boundaries fixed to mutability extended no farther than the orbit of the moon, beyond which all things were changeless and eternal. Gesner.

Page 53. line 427.

now o'er the stream

Of slow Avernus, birds rejoicing rise.

Avernus, from *Ἄεργος*, *without birds*, so termed because its waters exhaled a vapour so noxious, that all that attempted to fly over it inevitably perished.

BOOK III.

Page 63, line 83.

although my mind
Had been a womb to the betrayer.

Alluding to Minerva.

Page 78, line 372.

She views her image in the crystal orb.

It is conjectured that the hunter threw before his ferocious pursuer a globe of glass, so prepared as to be capable of reflecting objects—by looking upon which, the tiger was deluded into the belief that, in the diminished reflection of her own form, she beheld her lost cub ; and, thus beguiled, she afforded her enemy an opportunity of escaping. Gesner.

Page 79, line 392.

ye should both
Be worshipp'd in the Scythian's barb'rous fane.

Diana was worshipped in a temple in Tauris, upon the altars of which all strangers were immolated; Ceres exclaims that not Diana alone, but that Minerva likewise ought, henceforth, to be degraded by similar barbarous rites.

Page 83. line 464.

Near golden Acis,—————

Acis, after being killed by Polypheme, was changed into a Sicilian stream. Vide Ovid. Met. 13, 750.

Page 84. line 493.

And Polypheme himself avoids the grove.

Polypheme is represented by Euripides as a contemner of all religious observance.

RUFINUS.

BOOK I.

Page 98, line 30.

————— *the vengeful doom*

That on Rufinus fell.

Rufinus was an obscure native of Gaul, of considerable talents, but unequalled in dissimulation and vice ; he acquired many honorable and important employments at Constantinople, and at length became the chosen minister of the Emperor Theodosius, and likewise of his successors Honorius and Arcadius.

Page 102, line 102.

She gave the spear to Athamas.

A king of Thebes who, inflamed with madness, slew his own son Learchus.

Page 106, line 177.

Elusa's walls,—————

Elusa, formerly the capital of Novempopulania, is now a small village in Gascony.

Page 109, line 230.

The Cyanean isles,—————

These islands or rocks, which terminate the straits of the Bosphorus, are represented by the poets to have been once floating upon the water. Gibbon observes that this deception was occasioned by several pointed rocks, alternately covered and abandoned by the waves.

Ibid. line 237.

A royal dome he enters—————

The palace of Theodosius at Constantinople.

Page 113, line 311.

—————no shores

Are safe from his pursuit ; not Sirius fierce,

Nor Winter howling o'er Riphean rocks,

Retards his eagerness.

Gibbon explains this allusion in the following narrative.

“ Lucian, the son of the præfect Florentius, the oppressor of Gaul and the enemy of Julian, had employed a consi-

derable part of his inheritance, the fruit of rapine and corruption, to purchase the friendship of Rufinus, and the high office of Count of the East. But the new magistrate imprudently departed from the maxims of the court, and of the times; disgraced his benefactor, by the contrast of a virtuous and temperate administration; and presumed to refuse an act of injustice, which might have tended to the profit of the Emperor's uncle. Arcadius was easily persuaded to resent the supposed insult; and the præfect of the East* resolved to execute in person the cruel vengeance, which he meditated against this ungrateful delegate of his power. He performed, with incessant speed, the journey of seven or eight hundred miles, from Constantinople to Antioch, entered the capital of Syria at dead of night, and spread universal consternation among a people, ignorant of his design, but not ignorant of his character. The Count of the fifteen provinces of the East was dragged, like the vilest malefactor, before the arbitrary tribunal of Rufinus. Notwithstanding the clearest evi-

* Rufinus.

dence of his integrity, which was not impeached even by the voice of an accuser, Lucian was condemned, almost without a trial, to suffer a cruel and ignominious punishment. The ministers of the tyrant, by the order, and in the presence, of their master, beat him on the neck with leathern thongs, armed at the extremities with lead; and when he fainted under the violence of the pain, he was removed in a close litter, to conceal his dying agonies from the eyes of the indignant city. No sooner had Rufinus perpetrated this inhuman act, the sole object of his expedition, than he returned, amidst the deep, but silent, curses of a trembling people, from Antioch to Constantinople. *Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.* Vol. 5, 145.

Page 114, line 332.

But the high soul of Stilicho————

The minister and general of the Western empire, and the rival and enemy of Rufinus.

Page 118, line 400.

In full revenge for brave Promotus slain.

Promotus, the master-general of the infantry, had saved the empire from the invasion of the Ostrogoths; but he indignantly supported the pre-eminence of a rival,* whose character and profession he despised; and, in the midst of a public council, the impatient soldier was provoked to chastise with a blow the indecent pride of the favorite. This act of violence was represented to the Emperor as an insult, which it was incumbent on *his* dignity to resent. The disgrace and exile of Promotus were signified by a peremptory order, to repair, without delay, to a military station on the banks of the Danube; and the death of that general, (though he was slain in a skirmish with the Barbarians) was imputed to the perfidious arts of Rufinus.

Gibbon, Vol. 5. c. xxix.

Page 119, line 426.

Woody by the Persian's oar,———

* Rufinus.

Mount Athos, which projects, like a mighty promontory into the Ægean sea, was dug through at its base, and rendered navigable by Xerxes, that his ships might avoid a more tedious and dangerous passage.

BOOK II

Page 126, line 7.

Thy great avenger—————

The poet alludes to Stilicho.

Page 129, line 3.

Th' imperial victor ————

The Emperor Theodosius.

Page 132, line 68.

That city, too, which, emulous of Rome,

The city of Constantinople, the seat of the Roman
 7

empire in the east, built upon the coast of Thrace, immediately opposite to the city of Chalcedon.

Page 138, line 177.

Thy brother wears—————

Honorius, the Emperor of the west.

Page 140, line 221.

————— *with artful forms*

Of purple snakes adorn'd—————

The standard of the Roman cohorts, from the time of Trajan, represented the figure of a large dragon or serpent, the head of which was ornamented with silver, the remaining parts were composed of cloth or leather, and painted.

Page 152, line 450.

The waving serpents—————

See the preceding note.

Page 154, line 489.

Impetuous from the ranks—————

According to Zosimus, Gainas was the person who gave the signal for the death of Rufinus.

Page 155, line 500.

They mar his visage—————

These acts of barbarity are confirmed by the historians Zosimus and Jerom.

THE PHŒNIX.

Page 163, line 1.

Beyond where India's scented gales arise.

Milton alludes to this description in the following lines.

In media rubri maris unda, et odoriferum ver,
Littora longa Arabum, et sudantes balsama sylvæ,
Has inter Phœnix divina avis, unica terris,
Cœruleum fulgens diversicoloribus alis,

Auroram vitreis surgentem respicit undis.

Epitaphium Damonis, line 185.

The red sea waves adorn the middle part,
 And Araby's long shores, Spring decks the ground,
 And od'rous woods breathe forth balsamic sweets;
 And lone immured in these wild retreats,
 The Phoenix lifts her solitary wing,
 Of hues ethereal wove,
 And from the bosom of her tufted grove
 Beholds Aurora from the ocean spring.

THE PORCUPINE.

Page 171, line 2.

Stymphale, of thy wond'rous birds———

The lake Stymphale, in Arcadia, was infested by a fierce and destructive race of harpies; they were destroyed by Hercules.

ON THE STATUES OF THE PIOUS
BROTHERS.

Page 177.

The town of Catina, in Sicily, has frequently suffered from the eruptions of Mount Ætna. At one of those periods, when the town was in flames, and threatened by streams of burning lava, two young men, named Amphinomus and Anapus, delayed their flight from the town, and risked their lives, to save their aged parents, whom they brought away upon their shoulders. The statues, which the poet describes, were erected by the inhabitants to commemorate the event.

Page 180, line 47.

The sons who, duteous, dragg'd their mother's car.

After attesting the renown of Castor and Pollux, and of Æneas, Claudian refers to the fame of Cleobis and Biton, the sons of the priestess of Juno at Argos, who, when oxen could not be procured, yoked themselves to

their mother's chariot, and drew it to the temple. The goddess was implored to reward them with the best gift that Heaven could bestow upon mortality:—after having feasted themselves they retired to rest, and in the morning they were found dead.

ON THE SIXTH CONSULSHIP OF HONORIUS.

*the huntsman dreams
Of circling nets, and woods well-stored with game,
The judge, &c.*

Shakespeare, in a similar train of thought, describes the operations of Queen Mab upon the sleeping fancy.

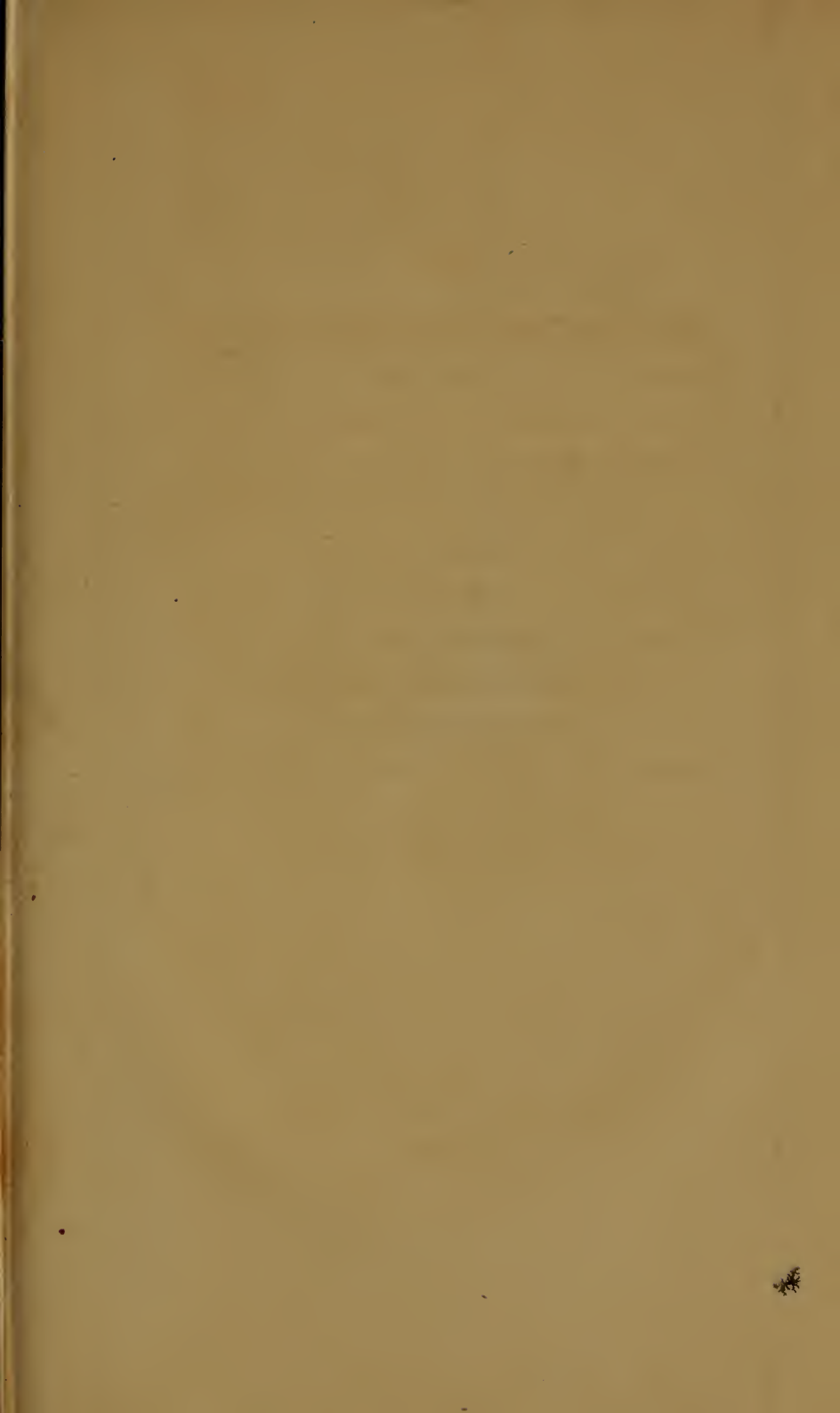
*she gallops night by night
Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love :
On courtiers' knees, that dream on court'sies straight :
O'er lawyers' fingers, who straight dream of fees :*

O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream ;

Sometimes she gallops o'er a courtier's nose,
 And then he dreams of smelling out a suit :
 And sometimes comes she with a tithe-pig's tail,
 Tickling a parson's nose as 'a lies asleep,
 Then dreams he of another benifice :
 Sometimes she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,
 And then he dreams of cutting foreign throats,
 Of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades,
 Of healths five fathom deep ; and then anon
 Drums in his ear ; at which he starts and wakes ;
 And being thus frightened, swears a prayer or two,
 And sleeps again.

Romeo and Juliet.

THE END OF THE NOTES.





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